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President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 170

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe

Draft resolution (A/55/L.8)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Italy to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.8.

Mr. Vento (Italy): As Permanent Representative of the State that is the current Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, I am honoured to introduce a draft resolution on this new item in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Allow me to also take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, and the delegation from the Council's Parliamentary Assembly that is here to follow the work of the General Assembly.

This item was inserted in the agenda in accordance with Recommendation 1411 of 21 June 1999 of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly, which stressed the need to enhance cooperation between the two organizations, in view of the contribution that the Council of Europe has made to the United Nations over the past 50 years, particularly in promoting the rule of law and the protection of human rights and democratic values.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe started in 1951, just two years after the Council was founded, with the signing of an agreement that was updated 20 years later, in 1971, through the Arrangement on Cooperation between the secretariat of the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Another milestone was the adoption at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of a resolution granting observer status to the Council of Europe.

The draft resolution that I am presenting today cites more recent examples of this cooperation, as follows.

At the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000", the Council of Europe contributed to the fight against trafficking in women and to the promotion of gender mainstreaming, while at the twenty-fourth special session, on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, the Council embraced the strategy for social cohesion, focusing on the protection of social rights, access to housing, employment and social protection and family and children policies.

The Council has supported United Nations efforts to restore peace in Kosovo by establishing close working relations with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and focusing on legislative reforms in line with texts such as the European Convention on Human Rights.

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On 11 to 13 October 2000, the Council organized a successful pan-European Conference on racism and intolerance to prepare for the 2001 United Nations World Conference in South Africa.

Other tasks lie ahead: the Council of Europe intends to contribute actively to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly for the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, scheduled for September 2001.

In his recent visit to the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, the President of the Italian Republic, Mr. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, recalled the high ethical and political beliefs that inspired the founding of the Council of Europe. It embodied the faith of European citizens in a system of shared values, enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, whose fiftieth anniversary will be celebrated in Rome on 3 and 4 November with a Ministerial Conference. Some of the pillars of this ambitious legal system are the European Social Charter, the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. These instruments, together with other conventions and recommendations, have helped consolidate the principles of freedom and justice in Europe. Moreover, the original vision of the Council of Europe helped pave the way for the integration of the European Union.

The borders of European civilization are not pre-established or strictly linked to geography. Rather, they depend on the power of these values to be understood and shared throughout the world. The Council currently consists of 41 States, representing more than 800 million people, but others will soon join, giving the organization a pan-European dimension. The Holy See, the United States of America, Canada, Japan and Mexico are observer members. Within the organization, consideration has begun on the possibility of granting a special "cooperative" status to countries interested in participating in its work, particularly in the field of democratization and modernization of the judiciary.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointed out during his recent visit to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, amid the great transformation known as globalization the world is still fighting intolerance, racism, xenophobia and desegregation — the very dangers targeted by the founders of the Council of Europe.

This is why we are convinced that closer cooperation with the United Nations can bear great results. This is why we would like to consider the idea of creating a liaison office for the Council in New York on a reciprocal basis.

I wish to conclude by recalling that the Council of Europe, as the sole pan-European organization, is in a position to make a substantial contribution to the United Nations in meeting its rising challenges. To grapple with these challenges effectively will necessitate a synergistic coordination of our efforts and resources.

For example, the Venice Commission, the Council's authoritative advisory body on legal and institutional matters, which celebrated its tenth anniversary last June, has begun to elaborate a package of standard legal elements and constitutional proposals towards finding a solution to the ethnic conflicts of member States.

Moreover, the interaction between culture and the environment is one of the main themes of a Ministerial Conference taking place in Florence even as we speak. On this occasion, an important new legal instrument, the Landscape Convention, has been opened for signature. The Convention contains highly innovative content and proposes to raise public awareness of quality-of-life issues.

However, the most important concept inspiring the actions of the Council of Europe, which I am convinced that the United Nations also fully shares, concerns democratic stability — entailing the interdependence of human rights, democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as conflict prevention, peace-building and stability. For more than five decades, the Council of Europe has been developing significant expertise in these issues. It is thus now able to make an increasingly substantial contribution to the prevention of conflict and, when unfortunately necessary, to long-term post-conflict peace and institution-building. The Council of Europe's capabilities in conflict prevention lie in a combination of standard-setting, cooperation — both collectively between all member countries and bilaterally — and monitoring, at the legal and political levels.

At this historic juncture, it would be timely for the General Assembly to ask the Secretary-General to explore ways and means of enhancing an already

advanced cooperation in order to meet the challenges, old and new, of the third millennium.

Since both the Council and the United Nations place human dignity at the centre of their missions and mandates, stronger working links between them can only aid in the achievement of their noble cause.

Mr. Bossière (France) *(spoke in French)*: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and the associated countries: Cyprus, Malta and Turkey associate themselves with this statement.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe has existed for a long time. It has developed constantly over the years especially since the agreement concluded in 1951 between the two institutions. In 1989, the observer status granted to the Council of Europe at the United Nations has enabled it to play an active role in areas of activity they have in common. This relates, first and foremost, to the protection and promotion of human rights, but also to the tireless quest for peace and international security.

Experience has shown that these two areas of activity are interdependent and that they reinforce each other. Security cannot be achieved without democracy and respect for human rights. This approach has been called, in the context of the Council of Europe, the quest for democratic stability.

Today, we have reached a new stage. The draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly constitutes a first in relations between the two organizations. It should, in the long run, strengthen the two major areas of cooperation: defending democracy, based on the pre-eminence of the rule of law and respect for human rights, but also, strengthening the contribution of the Council of Europe to regional security.

The defence of democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights is the first area of cooperation.

The Council of Europe, thanks especially to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, has done exemplary work in the area of human rights. In particular, it should be recalled that, with the creation of the European Court of Human Rights, the Convention established machinery, unique in Europe, for jurisdictional control of the respect for all of these basic rights by States parties.

On 3 and 4 November, a European Ministerial Conference, to which the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is invited, will take place in Rome in order to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention.

The draft resolution before us quite rightly emphasizes the many challenges facing the United Nations and which the Council of Europe also must face. By way of illustration we could refer to cooperation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and also that which exists between the International Law Commission of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as the Council's contribution to the preparatory process for recent special sessions in two areas of major importance for human rights and social progress, namely, Beijing Plus Five and Copenhagen Plus Five.

The European Union cannot fail to encourage the Council of Europe to maintain its active role, the one it has thus far played, and invite it to continue to work towards the realization of the commitments entered into during those two Summits and the follow-up special sessions.

The European Union also welcomes the contribution of the Council of Europe to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which will be held in 2001. In this connection, it welcomes the excellent progress made and the results from the pan-European Conference held in Strasbourg last week, in preparation for the 2001 World Conference.

Through these actions, the Council of Europe is confirming its determination to play a key role in the implementation in Europe of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The contribution of the Council of Europe to regional security is the second area where the United Nations could establish prospects for action.

The participation of the Council of Europe in regional security should, first and foremost, be judged by the facts. We can thus applaud its active

contribution to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) through its cooperation with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the establishment of an observer mission of the Council of Europe for the elections in Kosovo on 28 October. Similarly we should cite Sits handling of tasks entrusted to it by the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the protection of human rights and the reform of the judicial system.

A third creditable contribution to regional security is the assistance that the Council of Europe has provided to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

These actions are also part of the preventive diplomacy that the United Nations tries to develop. In the long run cooperation in this sphere could also foster and speed-up the difficult but necessary transition from an approach that is too often reactive in nature to actions that are based more on prevention. The European Union is also in favour of developing relations between the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

In conclusion, allow me to make three suggestions aimed at further strengthening cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

There should be an increase in the exchange of information. The United Nations and the Council of Europe have a mutual interest in a greater and more frequent exchange of their reports and documents.

Bilateral relations between the two bodies should be strengthened at the highest level. In a symbolic manner, the holding of annual meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe would confirm the determination of both sides to have increased cooperation between the two organizations.

The expertise of the two bodies should be enhanced. The establishment by the Council of Europe of a think tank to deal with issues of common interest to the United Nations and the Council, from which the United Nations could draw on technical skills and know-how, could also contribute to further enhancing working relations between the two organizations.

From now on it will be for the General Assembly, as part of its annual consideration of the draft resolution on this item, to follow up this task of reflection and ingenuity in order that the contribution of the Council of Europe to the promotion of human rights and regional security may usefully support the work of the United Nations throughout the world.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): My delegation very much welcomes the initiative to give the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe its rightful place as a specific item on the agenda of the General Assembly. We especially appreciate the efforts of the Italian Government in realizing this.

In striving towards our vision of a United Nations for the twenty-first century, strengthening relationships and increasing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is intrinsic to the achievement of their ultimate common goals. Organizations such as the Council of Europe — which have an important role to play in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law — can, without imposing any of their views and values, comprehensively furnish the United Nations with long-term pan-European experiences, thus contributing to, and further enhancing, the United Nations in its work to resolve some of the most pressing global challenges before us.

The Council of Europe remains the leading regional organization in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights, in both standard-setting and in the implementation dimension. It should be noted that the European Convention on Human Rights was adopted in 1950 as the first legally binding instrument devoted to the protection of a wide range of civil and political rights. As cited in its preamble, the Convention was clearly inspired by the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, thereby acknowledging even then an important link between the United Nations and the Council of Europe system.

Here at the United Nations the Council of Europe enjoys observer status, with links between the two organizations well established. However, this is the first time that the General Assembly has discussed cooperation between the two, and it is our hope that it will result in the establishment of stronger cooperation and specific joint programmes.

During recent years, cooperation has slowly begun to increase within the framework of enhanced United Nations cooperation with regional organizations. The practice of convening meetings between the United Nations Secretary-General and the heads of regional organizations, including the forthcoming fourth meeting on the theme of cooperation for peace-building, is welcome. However, we feel that they should be more frequent and be followed-up by meetings between the heads of specific programmes and officials of the respective organizations. The practice of the tripartite high-level meetings between the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe is a prime example of where cooperation and coordination of activities in areas of common concern is already functioning.

In discussing current cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, we should mention the close cooperation established under the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), where, upon the invitation of the United Nations, the Council of Europe seconded its experts, who are working in the area of judicial reform, local and regional democracy, property rights and on a population census.

I turn to Croatia's own experience. During the process of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, which was at the time governed by the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), in the context of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, the Croatian Government witnessed the establishment of excellent cooperation between UNTAES and the Council of Europe in the field of developing education curriculums for minorities. Such cooperation and, more important, its results were highly praised by the international community at large.

With regard to our neighbour Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia welcomes the readiness of the Council of Europe to continue to fulfil the role assigned to it in that country under the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Republic of Croatia believes that membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Council of Europe would have a very positive impact on further democratic development and the protection of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The cooperation between the two organizations could be enhanced in a number of ways, including a better flow of information and the availability of relevant documents at meetings convened by both organizations. With its expertise in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights and legal reforms, including the very important area of local and regional democracy, which has no counterpart in the activities of the United Nations system, the Council of Europe could significantly contribute to the activities of the United Nations.

One of the key issues in rethinking the role of regional organizations in the changing world remains the timely division of activities between the United Nations as the universal Organization, on the one hand, and relevant regional organizations, on the other. With this aim in mind, a streamlining of activities is needed in order to make better use of available resources and avoid unnecessary duplication of activities. With regard to relations between the Council of Europe and the United Nations, such duplication may occur with respect to human rights monitoring mechanisms. Despite human rights monitoring mechanisms remaining a main goal of both organizations, without due comparison of achieved results duplication of monitoring may simply result in significantly divergent reports on the same human rights situation.

As a member of the Council of Europe and the United Nations, Croatia has actively contributed to the work of both organizations. In recent years Croatia has been the subject of human rights monitoring mechanisms operated by both, thereby having experienced in practice some of the predicaments I have just mentioned. More specifically, in 1992 monitoring by the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights was established, and subsequent to the membership of the Republic of Croatia in the Council of Europe, in 1996, Council of Europe monitoring was established, covering both human rights and democratic developments. Recently, the Parliamentary Assembly decided to end the monitoring procedure, welcoming Croatia's significant progress towards honouring its commitments and obligations as a member State since its accession in 1996, and in particular since the parliamentary and presidential elections held earlier this year.

In the light of the circumstances, the Republic of Croatia expects that these achievements and the

continuing progress on its part should act as a pertinent benchmark to be adequately and appropriately reflected in the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Croatia fully supports the strengthening of cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations, being aware that that regional organization, with its specific characteristics, can significantly contribute to the work of the United Nations. The Council of Europe's expertise in the development of human rights standards, in particular through the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, should undoubtedly be reflected in the work of the relevant United Nations bodies. The same is true with respect to the achievements of the Council of Europe in standard-setting in the field of local and regional democracy, something which has yet to be achieved within the United Nations system.

Last but not least, the parliamentary dimension of the work of the Council of Europe should not be neglected, and could possibly provide guidance for future developments within the universal family of the United Nations.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Within the framework of diversifying its foreign policy, Mexico has strengthened and deepened its bilateral, inter-regional and multilateral relations with Europe and with European institutions in the political and economic spheres and in terms of cooperation. In December 1999, Mexico became an observer at the Council of Europe; this has led to fruitful dialogue with the Council's 41 member States and to active participation in all areas of common interest. My country attaches great importance to the work of the Council of Europe, which was reflected in my Government's decision to establish a permanent representation office in Strasbourg to follow the Council's deliberations and decisions.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe has contributed to the success of the Organization's missions and programmes in Europe. Thanks to its genuinely pan-European nature, the Council has been a significant factor in the quest for peace and security and in promoting the values, purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter on the European continent. My delegation is convinced that strengthening that cooperation will yield real benefits for both organizations, and we hope that the Assembly will adopt draft resolution A/55/L.8, of which Mexico is pleased to be a sponsor, without a vote.

Mr. Bergqvist (Sweden): Let me stress first of all that I entirely associate myself with the message delivered by the presidency of the European Union.

The Council of Europe was created half a century ago as a peace project. After two devastating world wars, the organization was set up to promote reconciliation and peaceful cooperation among democratic States. After the fall of the Berlin wall, the Council of Europe was faced with new important challenges. As we know, its membership has nearly doubled over the past decade; today, more than one fifth of the States Members of the United Nations are also active members of the Council of Europe.

The inclusion of the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe was considered to be a major factor in promoting peace and preventing conflict in Europe. Security is built on common values. The founders of the Council of Europe wanted to share a peaceful future based on common values: democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and human dignity. Indeed, with great relief, we have seen examples of yesterday's enemies becoming today's partners in building a better tomorrow.

The reasons why the Council of Europe places so much emphasis on democracy and human rights are clear enough. Lack of democratic processes and non-observance of human rights often lead to alienation and violent conflict. Instead, security should be based on institution-building, participation and dialogue. There can be no sustainable solutions to violent conflicts without democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe is now also developing its activities in the field. I shall give just a few examples. In the framework of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the Council of Europe leads activities on issues such as creating ombudsman institutions, promoting inter-ethnic reconciliation, and gender issues. In Chechnya, the Council of Europe provides three experts to the office of the Ombudsman to assist him in his work to investigate human rights abuses. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

pays visits to prisons and other institutions in individual member States, and reports on its findings.

When developing activities in the field, we should place particular emphasis on cooperation among international organizations. That is why Sweden welcomes the draft resolution (A/55/L.8) before the Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Such cooperation could be enhanced through extensive use of regular contacts, including meetings; a continuous framework for dialogue; increased transparency; and practical cooperation, including the appointment of liaison officers and points of contact, cross-representation at appropriate meetings and other contacts intended to increase understanding of each organization's tools and methods.

Stronger bonds are good both for the United Nations and for the Council of Europe, and not only because we can achieve less duplication and a more efficient use of resources. We can also strengthen the support for our common values and achieve better protection for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Civilian crisis management and conflict prevention are areas now under rapid development in various international organizations. That makes cooperation essential. It is gratifying to note that the Brahimi report puts emphasis on the need to make peacekeepers and peace-builders inseparable partners. As stated in the Brahimi report, peace-building missions should include international judicial experts, penal experts and human rights specialists in sufficient numbers to strengthen rule of law institutions. The report also notes that long-term preventive strategies must work to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented. These are areas in which the Council of Europe possesses a special expertise and in which cooperation should be of great value to both organizations, and indeed of great value to our peoples. Let us therefore work together in order to prevent future violent conflict.

Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein): It gives me particular pleasure to address this item on our agenda, since the Council of Europe is the oldest political organization in Europe and one whose high standards and principles concerning the rule of law, human rights and democratic institutions are exemplary.

In the view of my delegation, a strengthening and further enhancement of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is long overdue. Although the relationship between the two organizations dates back to 1951, when a cooperation agreement was concluded, the aim then was much less ambitious than it is today. Fundamental changes and developments have taken place since that time. The membership of the United Nations has increased and its original mandates have expanded, and similar developments have occurred with respect to the membership of other organizations, including the Council of Europe.

There are a number of areas in which the Council of Europe can reinforce the purposes and principles of the United Nations and in which Member States can profit from the Council of Europe's experience, in particular in the fields of post-conflict peace-building, confidence-building measures, human rights, social development, the fight against racism, and crime prevention.

The Council of Europe has played, and continues to play, an important role in promoting a stable and democratic south-eastern Europe. The cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) is a good example of concrete interaction in operational activities, in this particular case in the areas of the judiciary, the protection of minorities, property rights, registration and local democracy, as well as the observation of the electoral process in Kosovo. In the same region, namely in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Council of Europe is engaged in the field of judicial reform and that of the protection and promotion of human rights, and it is making a major contribution to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

The Council of Europe has been, and will continue to be, actively involved in past and future United Nations conferences and special sessions and their respective preparatory processes. The latest examples are the special sessions on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Beijing + 5. The European preparatory process for the World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which will take place next summer, is being conducted by the Council of Europe,

and we note with satisfaction the results of the Pan-European Conference which was held in Strasbourg last week.

In this respect, we wish to pay tribute to the work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which was established in 1993 following the first summit meeting of heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member States. The Commission is composed of public figures chosen for their high moral authority and recognized expertise in dealing with questions of racism and intolerance. They include judges, parliamentarians, journalists and psychologists. Along with its examination of international and national legislation, the Commission has studied policies and practices and has addressed specific issues as well. The success of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) can be attributed to its activities on raising awareness, disseminating information and cooperating with non-governmental organizations.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the presence of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, as well as that of members of the Political Affairs Committee and of the Sub-Committee on Relations with Non-Member Countries of the Parliamentary Assembly. Their presence underlines the commitment of the Council of Europe to build a closer relationship with the United Nations.

The draft resolution before us contains all the necessary elements which form the basis for increased cooperation between the two organizations. Liechtenstein will actively support all endeavours leading to the realization of this aim.

Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino): The Republic of San Marino welcomes the inclusion of the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe" on the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are extremely thankful to the delegation of Italy, which promoted and sponsored this remarkable initiative.

San Marino co-sponsored the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe" because it is convinced that cooperation among States and regional organizations is an integral part of the concept of peace. It is now clear that the efforts made by the Secretary-General, the General Assembly and the Security Council to maintain peace, to ensure respect of human rights and the rule of law and to apply the values of democracy are ineffective without the cooperation and support of other entities acting in the international arena, primarily regional organizations.

The United Nations and the Council of Europe are two complementary organizations and should therefore be linked by an intensive cooperation with a view to reaching their common goals, while avoiding, whenever possible, duplication and overlap in those areas in which both organizations have their own respective and specific roles to play.

Forty-one member States, from every European region, now form the Council of Europe. For this reason, and because of its particular institutional structure, the Council is a unique forum for discussion on issues of regional and global interest. The effective action of the Council of Europe in the field of human rights, for instance, is evident from the activities of the European Court for Human Rights. This judicial organ has, in fact, led many States to reconsider practices that could have adverse effects on the full enjoyment of human rights by their own citizens.

We have witnessed some examples of the cooperation between these two organizations and the important results that it has brought about, especially in the fields of human rights, humanitarian activities, assistance to refugees, legal and social issues and culture and education. My delegation deeply appreciated the contribution made by the Council of Europe through its participation in many activities of the United Nations, inter alia, the special session of the General Assembly on women, "Women 2000", and the special session on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, as well as its constant presence at the regular meetings of the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

I would like in particular to stress the role played by the Council of Europe in the crisis in Kosovo in supporting United Nations efforts in the search for a peaceful settlement and its eagerness to offer its cooperation, in its fields of competence, to political and institutional reconstruction. We are also grateful to the Council of Europe for the coordination of the European Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance to which the United Nations was invited.

By resolution 44/6, the General Assembly granted observer status to the Council of Europe. We therefore strongly support a more effective presence in New York and the more active involvement of the Council of Europe in the work of the General Assembly.

The Council of Europe is now in a position to increase its already substantial contribution to the United Nations. It may contribute effectively to increasing democratic stability and building pluralistic democracies, as well as in many other fields where its expertise is well recognized. It may also be an important vehicle to spread the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in Europe and in other regions of the world. We very much hope the Secretary-General will continue to explore, in close consultation with the Council of Europe, different possibilities to further enhance the cooperation between the two organizations.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): I am grateful to you, Mr. President, for allowing the representative of a European State Member of the United Nations that is not yet a member of the Council of Europe — although we are fervently aspiring to become one — to speak on the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and that lofty and respected European institution.

The Council of Europe has given the continent a soul. Its ethical and normative work, which is rich and eclectic in nature, has greatly contributed to making that institution a moral reference point, not only for Europe, but without doubt at the global level.

Its continent-specific mission can in no way be regarded as an obstacle to cooperation between the two organizations. The common values and principles that inspire them and that are to be found inscribed in golden letters at the very heart of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as in the Statute of the Council of Europe, the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter, are universal in nature. They can be promoted without difficulty through actions designed and implemented in concert. Whether we are speaking about the promotion of human rights and civic freedoms, the strengthening of representative democracy or the protection of minorities, the concerns of the two organizations converge. That is an essential bond that is very favourable to joint undertakings.

That great and very worthy institution — with its headquarters in Strasbourg, at the very heart of a region long battered and bruised — is unquestionably a symbolic example of the precious contribution that regional cooperation can make in the world if it is based on respect for shared principles and values.

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations, as well as its specialized agencies, stems from the same moral reference point and from identical ethical commitments. For example, we note with satisfaction, from document A/55/191, that the Council of Europe has concluded agreements with a number of agencies of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, whose activities are greatly appreciated by the Principality of Monaco, which regularly contributes to them. The many conventions and legal instruments, which are essentially profoundly ethical in nature, developed within the Council of Europe are also, we are pleased to say, a specific and useful manifestation of this commitment.

This issue provides the delegation of Monaco with the opportunity to express the admiration of my country for the work that has been done for more than half a century in the Council of Europe which, after the end of the Second World War, greatly helped to restore dignity, strength and traditional values to the European continent. These values are shared by the people of Monaco. They have been their values for centuries, since the first lord of Monaco — whose dynasty extended back to 8 January 1297 — set up in 1331 a general assembly of inhabitants, called at the time "the University", which had jurisdiction over all public affairs.

This community of inhabitants, which brought together all the heads of family, without exception, rapidly became a parliament, presided over by the lord or his representative, the *podesta*. For centuries this parliament, working in complete freedom, dealt with all the problems of daily life that the population might encounter. Its jurisdiction was extremely broad, covering the police, road maintenance, the organization of schools and poor relief. The people of Monaco were not subject to any levies on their property or on their use of communal ovens or mills, after the pattern of the freedoms practised in the Republic of Genoa, whence most of the people of Monaco originated.

More recently, in 1910, after the first constitutional phase — that of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, granted in 1848 — universal suffrage, with the right to vote extended to women, was established for the elections to the Communal Council. On 5 January 1911, the Principality of Monaco set up a modern-style constitution that provided for two democratic assemblies: the Communal Council and the National Council. These were kept under the constitution that was adopted on 17 December 1962 and which is now in force. That basic text, which, in its third chapter — not in the preamble — provides for fundamental freedoms and rights, thus attests to the political will to give such rights an effective and legally binding scope.

Thirty-two articles are devoted to this and guarantee, inter alia, political rights, the equality of citizens before the law, the security of the individual, the non-retroactive application of criminal law, the abolition of capital punishment, the inviolability of domicile and property, respect for private and family life, freedom of worship and freedom of expression. It also grants the people of Monaco freedom of employment and provides State assistance for the poor, the unemployed, the sick, invalids and the elderly and provides maternity benefits and free primary and secondary education, as well as allowing union activity and recognizing the right of assembly and association and the right to petition public authorities.

Whether we are dealing with individual civil and political rights or collective economic, social and cultural rights, or obligations of the State with respect to ends or means, all these constitutional provisions give nationals of my country, as well as foreigners, as prescribed by Article 32 of the Constitution, the effective enjoyment, with judicial safeguards, of all the public freedoms recognized and articulated in the constitutions of modern democracies.

The guarantee of these rights is further strengthened by the scrupulously respected fundamental constitutional principle of the separation of administrative, legislative and judicial powers and the functions stemming therefrom.

The Principality of Monaco is a State in which the rule of law prevails. The powers of the various authorities, as well as the acts of individuals, are limited, only by the law, which finds its formal points of reference in the Constitution, along with the remedies it has prescribed for use in the courts, which enable private persons to secure the repeal of public acts that are contrary to the law, and also reparation for damage suffered.

This brief *"pro domo"* account is intended to remind you that the Monegasque nation for almost seven centuries now has enjoyed a liberal, democratic and enlightened system of government, attentive to the interests and needs of the people and the various generations that have succeeded one another over time in this modest territory.

Democracy, first of all direct, then representative, which has been a feature of Monaco's entire history, has enabled the Monegasque people to share in debate; it has given them a taste for ideas, for dialogue and for respect for what is in the general interest, which can be seen today, very vibrant and alive in Monegasque society. It is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the harmonious human relations that prevail among the various communities in my country, as well as for its balanced economic and social development.

The delegation of the Principality of Monaco rightly appreciates the draft resolution that has just been introduced so brilliantly by His Excellency Mr. Sergio Vento, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of a country which itself is a historical cradle of our democracies, Italy. We wish to thank him very sincerely for this initiative and to assure him of the full support that we will give this draft. Today we wish to become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, which correctly draws attention to the importance and quality of the cooperation that has been ongoing for a number of years now between the Council of Europe and United Nations institutions as a whole. It also highlights the need to continue and expand that cooperation.

The Principality of Monaco is perfectly ready to contribute further to this activity, both within the United Nations framework and in that of the Council of Europe. The concerted activities carried out in the parliamentary area and in the economic and social spheres, in education and research, as well as culture and communications, are given careful attention by the Monegasque authorities.

The constant struggle to protect human rights and freedoms, the application of humanitarian law, assistance to refugees and to victims of torture, abuse and discrimination is a struggle that we share.

The Principality of Monaco has actively participated, as has the Council of Europe, with its commitment to these issues, in these special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to women in the year 2000 and to social development. It is also preparing to participate very energetically, with a view to achieving real concrete results, in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which will take place in August and September of 2001 in South Africa, and to which I am certain the Council of Europe will make a major contribution.

Lastly, we should note the major role in conflict prevention, and long-term peace-building that is increasingly being played by regional organizations in parallel with the United Nations. In this respect, the Council of Europe can offer its unique experience in the establishment of the rule of law, safeguards for social peace and international security, based on democratic rule and the protection of human rights. Its activities and recommendations in this area are of incalculable value. We should never hesitate to have recourse to its expertise.

Our very ancient liberal democratic tradition, which I have just described, has pervaded countless generations of the citizens of Monaco. It now permits them, alongside their Sovereign and their Government, to feel total concern for the ills and misfortunes of peoples, not only in Europe but throughout the world, affected by dictatorship, lack of freedom, violence in all its forms, poverty and under-development.

In conclusion, we welcome the presence of Mr. Walter Schwimmer, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, whose skill and dedication are very widely respected, and I take pleasure in confirming that the Government of Monaco, with the greatest possible conviction, encourages further cooperation between the two institutions and the unreserved strengthening of that cooperation.

Mr. Bojer (Denmark): I take great pleasure in taking the floor on today's item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe". I am especially pleased to be speaking here in the presence of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and of members of parliaments involved in the work of both the United Nations and the Council of Europe. In this connection, let me recall that at the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, held in August this year here in this Assembly, the Speaker of the Danish Folketing advocated strengthening the parliamentary dimension in relation to the United Nations and other international organizations.

Denmark was a founding member of the United Nations in 1945. And in 1949, only four years later, Denmark joined forces with eight other European countries to establish the Council of Europe. Since then, Denmark has considered its membership of both organizations to be not only a privilege but indeed an obligation.

The Council of Europe, like the United Nations, came into being as a result of those forceful words: Never again. Never again should our States suffer from the scourge of war. Never again should the peoples of the world see their human rights repressed, violated and obliterated. Never again should we experience the atrocities of the Second World War. This is the obligation of our membership, and it is the very thrust of both organizations. There is, in fact, an inextricable interrelationship — sometimes subtle, but always inextricable — between respect for human rights and preservation of peace.

On their own merits, and within their respective mandates, both organizations have important roles to play with respect to peace and security. Both organizations are building on norms of good conduct and strengthening and monitoring commitments to conform to these norms.

In the early years, the Council of Europe and its member States looked to the United Nations for inspiration and advice. The European Convention on Human Rights, the main convention of the Council of Europe, is directly inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Today the United Nations can look to the Council of Europe for assistance and support to approach the challenges it faces. The Council of Europe is in a position to contribute substantially to the prevention of conflicts — one of the major challenges facing the United Nations — through its legal framework for the protection of human rights and its mechanism for monitoring the obligations and commitments stemming from membership of the organization. These, in fact, are essential tools of preventive diplomacy of the kind so often advocated by the Secretary-General when he

emphasises the crucial dimension of conflict prevention in peace-building.

The draft resolution duly acknowledges that the Council of Europe is promoting the prevention of conflict and long-term post-conflict peace-building through political and institutional reform. Indeed, it stresses that the standards and principles of the Council of Europe contribute to the solution of conflicts throughout Europe.

We have already experienced the commitment of the Council of Europe to cooperate with the United Nations in the special sessions of the General Assembly following up the world conferences in Beijing and Copenhagen. And we are experiencing it in the preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. In Kosovo, the Council of Europe will provide assistance in the upcoming elections. These are just a few examples. Others are also mentioned in the draft resolution, and more will materialize as cooperation broadens and deepens.

During the Millennium Summit the world's heads of State and Government took stock of the challenges that face the United Nations at the beginning of the new millennium. They resolved

> "To strengthen the capacity of all our countries to implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights, including minority rights." (*resolution 55/2, United Nations Millennium Declaration, para. 25*)

The principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights, including minority rights, are indispensable to security and peace in the twenty-first century. My Government is confident that cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe will contribute greatly to peace and security.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): Allow me to take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the members of the delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly.

Let me start by expressing my appreciation for there being an agenda item on cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations. It provides a good opportunity to discuss possible ways for these two organizations to cooperate and how this regional institution might contribute to our work.

Despite some ongoing cooperation, the Council of Europe and its work have not received enough attention within the United Nations. Putting cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe on the agenda of the General Assembly and adopting a resolution on this item is a significant step in this direction.

Lithuania has always actively supported close cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations. The Council is in a position to make a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations, in particular in strengthening of democratic security and in those fields where the Council's expertise is well recognized: the rule of law, human rights and social and economic rights.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This year we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the European Convention on Human Rights. Post-war Western European Governments set out a list of basic human rights and freedoms, with the aim of achieving democracy and lasting stability on the continent. After 50 years we can say that the protection and promotion of individual human rights and fundamental freedoms have become an indispensable part of Europe's identity.

Since the organization's establishment, its shape and the scope of its work have undergone major changes. The arrival of Central and Eastern European countries in the 1990s meant that the institution became fully pan-European. Due to the new global challenges, the Council had to adapt to a new environment, which has become more diverse and complex. New priorities have been emerging. These include migration, social exclusion, minorities and corruption, as well as environmental protection, AIDS, drugs and organized crime.

The fact that countries from other continents show interest in the work of the Council greatly encourages us to promote the experience and achievements of the organization. We take this opportunity to welcome Mexico as the newest observer to the Council, which it has been since the end of last year.

Most of the issues and challenges dealt with at the regional level by the Council of Europe are the same as those we face at the United Nations. Therefore,

we see ample opportunities for constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

One of the main areas is the exchange of information and experience between the two organizations in the sphere of the protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms. In this regard, we attach great importance to the already ongoing cooperation between the Council of Europe and the officers of the United Nations High Commissioners for both Human Rights and Refugees. One example that might be singled out is the European Conference against Racism, which also dealt with intolerance, organized last week by the Council in preparation for the United Nations World Conference against racism to be held next year in South Africa. We also welcome the contributions of the Council of Europe to the United Nations special sessions, Beijing + 5 and Copenhagen + 5.

The Council of Europe plays an important role in implementing in the European countries the principles enshrined in the universal human rights instruments. In addition, we would welcome the Council's contributing to the work of the United Nations by making available the Council's expertise in strengthening human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We would also welcome the opening of a liaison office of the Council of Europe in New York, which would facilitate the sharing of information between the two organizations.

Conflict-prevention activities are another area where the Council of Europe could contribute substantially. The Council's legal framework for the protection of human rights and its mechanism for monitoring the obligations of member States demonstrate its expertise in this field. Moreover, the Council's achievements in the field of building democratic security, confidence-building measures, the protection of children, the protection of national minorities and the fight against racism might be very beneficial to these efforts.

In this regard, we commend the valuable ongoing contribution of the Council of Europe to the continued full and rigorous implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The Council of Europe has established close working relations with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on a wide array of issues.

In 2001 Lithuania will assume the presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Among other priorities, emphasis will be placed on the consolidation of the Council's efforts to foster the values of human rights, civil society and democratic stability throughout the continent. The experience of successful cooperation between the United Nations institutions and the Council of Europe in the Balkans demonstrates that constructive working relations between the two organizations would also be of great value.

In conclusion, I express my hope that the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly and the adoption of a resolution will give us an opportunity to exchange views about possible ways for these two organizations to cooperate, and will also prepare a good framework for establishing a target-oriented constructive relationship.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I wish to thank the Government of Italy for having taken the initiative of including this item on the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly and for having introduced the draft resolution on this item. Its adoption will undoubtedly give new impetus to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, the basis for which was established in 1951.

I am also pleased to welcome among us the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, and the delegation of the Sub-Committee on relations with non-member countries of the Parliamentary Assembly, whose presence here today testifies to the importance of the item under consideration.

The Council of Europe, established in 1949, was the first pan-European political institution. The goals and tasks of the organization are the achievement of greater unity among its member States through cooperation in all spheres, except for military issues, on the basis of a single value system comprising dedication to democracy, respect for human rights and the primacy of law. The implementation and promotion of such values are the concrete mandate and raison d'être of the Council of Europe.

Azerbaijan's entry into the Council of Europe and adherence to European conventions and other international legal instruments were an historical and strategic necessity. This aspiration was directly defined

by the deliberate choice of our people, which considers itself to be an inalienable part of Europe, to establish European values and standards in Azerbaijan.

Over the years of its independence, Azerbaijan has achieved significant progress in political, social, economic and cultural development. Our country has significantly strengthened political and economic stability. A constructive dialogue among the various political forces, free activity of the mass media and the gradual introduction of market reforms have become open realities in today's Azerbaijan. In the past four years, from the moment Azerbaijan requested full membership of the Council of Europe, we have achieved great progress in ensuring the primacy of law, the protection of human rights and the building of a democratic society.

I wish to inform the Assembly that the Republic of Azerbaijan has begun to implement its post-application commitments, as set down in Opinion No. 222 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Azerbaijan has adhered to 14 conventions of the Council of Europe and in February 1998 was the first country in the region to abolish capital punishment. The next important step on the road to democratic reform was the abolishment of press censorship in August 1998.

In recent years, in the context of judicial reform, Azerbaijan has taken a number of steps to bring our judicial-legal system into conformity with international standards, including the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights, its Protocols and other European instruments. Azerbaijan's legal system has also established a tripartite judicial system consisting of a high court, an appeals court and a constitutional court, which in turn serves to strengthen the trust of citizens in the legal system.

Azerbaijan is currently preparing for parliamentary elections scheduled for November 5. The legal basis for these elections is laid down in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan and in recently adopted laws and normative acts in conformity with international requirements. I would also stress the special role played by the expert assistance supplied by international organizations, including the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Commission for Democracy through Law, in the preparation of electoral legislation and in the improved implementation of these laws. The great majority of these recommendations have already been taken into account by the Government and Azerbaijan is prepared to pursue this successful cooperation.

The Government of Azerbaijan is taking all the necessary measures to hold free and fair elections. I wish briefly to affirm that the Central Election Commission has taken the decision to allow most leading political parties, including the opposition, to participate in the forthcoming parliamentary elections on a proportional basis. During the elections, we will also establish the conditions necessary to inviting numerous observers. It is well known that Azerbaijan already hosts a long-term Observation Mission of the OSCE and we are inviting observers from the Council of Europe as well.

The aforementioned reforms and other actions that we have undertaken will also be further implemented. This process has become irreversible. Of course, problems and difficulties remain, but we are overcoming them with the very important help of experts, including those from the Council of Europe.

It is well known that Azerbaijan is experiencing a difficult moment in its history. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country are being cruelly violated by a neighbouring State. One fifth of our country's territory remains under the occupation of Armenian forces, while 1 million Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons continue to suffer. The ongoing 12-year armed conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has not only harmed Azerbaijan, but is also preventing the establishment of stability throughout the southern Caucasus and delaying the democratic development of our States.

It is well known that, in 1993, the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding the unconditional withdrawal of occupation forces from the territory of Azerbaijan. As of 1992, the OSCE has dealt directly with the settlement of the conflict. Unfortunately, the resolutions and decisions adopted have yet to be implemented.

In spite of the difficult and tense situation, the leadership of Azerbaijan is observing the ceasefire regime and doing its utmost to hasten the settlement process. In its recent letters to the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe and the President of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly, the President of

Azerbaijan again reaffirmed my country's commitment to settling the conflict peacefully on the basis of the norms and principles of international law in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

The strengthening and harmonization of relations with the Council of Europe will be significantly promoted by joint action in the context of Azerbaijan's cooperation programme with that organization. I wish to stress that the positive influence of the speeding and strengthening of reforms in Azerbaijan and of the enhancing of democratic institutions in our country is being exerted through the close cooperation of Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe within the framework of the programme of Activities for the Development and Consolidation of Democratic Stability. We are prepared to discuss with the Council of Europe ways and means to improve the programmes for cooperation.

We regard entry into the Council of Europe not as a goal in itself, but as the beginning of a long-term partnership within the framework of a united Europe, designed for the further improvement of the bases established in recent years of a democratic and free society in Azerbaijan.

The Council of Europe, the sole pan-European organization, can make a substantial contribution to solving the growing problems of the United Nations. It can also make a substantial contribution in those areas in which its experience is recognized, in particular in helping to establish pluralistic democratic States based on the primacy of law and respect for human rights. The Council of Europe can thereby promote the reaffirmation — especially on the European continent — of the ideals set forth in the United Nations Charter and their propagation elsewhere in the world. That is why we support today's draft resolution and hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus): We fully associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union. We have asked to add our voice to the subject, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe", because, like many other States, we are members of both organizations and well aware of the lofty principles and high ideals they both serve. What is more, this is the first time this item has been debated in the General Assembly. Of course, we would like also to express our deep appreciation to the Italian delegation for taking the initiative for the inscription of the item on the agenda, its allocation to a plenary meeting and its presentation here.

The United Nations and the Council of Europe share many common goals, and therefore closer cooperation and coordination between them would render both more vital players on crucial issues such as human rights and basic freedoms. The fields of cooperation between the two are too numerous to repeat. The draft resolution introduced by the representative of Italy, of which Cyprus is a sponsor, refers to the most striking examples of cooperation, such as issues of international law, development, women's rights, racism and intolerance, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and refugees — the list goes on.

There is no doubt in our minds that both organizations will be benefited by this cooperation, especially in the areas of common endeavours, with mankind the ultimate main beneficiary. We therefore wholeheartedly support this cooperation.

Cyprus, over the years of its membership in the Council of Europe, has witnessed the Council's constructive contribution to human rights and international law. In the case of the problem of Cyprus, the role of the Council of Europe has been very constructive. In this regard, we take the opportunity to express to Mr. Schwimmer, the Secretary General of the Council, and the distinguished European parliamentarians present today, our deep appreciation.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): Austria highly welcomes this first General Assembly discussion on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe," especially in the presence of the Secretary General of the Council, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, and the parliamentarians of the Council of Europe. The Austrian Government and people have been deeply committed to both global and regional organizations since the very beginning of our membership in 1955, 45 years ago.

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter refers to the possibility of regional organizations sharing the burden of keeping peace. Consequently, there is ample opportunity for a division of labour between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, especially in the field of conflict prevention and settlement. It is now up to us, the Member States, to support the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and Secretary General Walter

Schwimmer in their efforts to intensify the dialogue and cooperation between the two organizations.

In this respect, Austria was pleased to note that an excellent meeting of the Secretary-General of the United Nations took place in Strasbourg on 3 October with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and representatives of the Council.

The Council of Europe is the central focus for the protection of human rights and democratic rights in Europe, and is committed, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan has rightly pointed out, to creating a culture of human rights throughout the European continent. Considering the goals of the United Nations and the Council, it is obvious that fields of cooperation abound: human rights, education, monitoring of elections, protection of children, gender equality, the fight against corruption — to just name a few.

A good recent example is the European Conference against Racism, held in Strasbourg, which will be an important contribution and input to the World Conference against racism to be held in South Africa next year. I would also like to emphasize the role of the Council as partner of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. The Council has demonstrated its determination to be an active member in the efforts of the international community to assist in solving a major humanitarian conflict.

Austria therefore fully supports a further intensification of the cooperation between the two organizations, and welcomes the idea of a Council of Europe presence in New York in the form of a liaison office. This would permit a continuous dialogue between our organizations. We are confident that our meeting today, in which we will adopt the first General Assembly resolution on this item, will be an important step towards intensified cooperation in the future.

Mr. Atkinson (United Kingdom): The delegation of France has already spoken on behalf of the European Union. My delegation fully endorses that statement and would like to make a few further points.

The United Kingdom welcomes the forthcoming adoption of the draft resolution; it usefully clarifies the areas in which the United Nations and the Council of Europe will continue to cooperate, and we should use this opportunity to focus on producing practical results.

When the Council of Europe commenced its annual visits to this General Assembly in 1997, through its sub-committee on relations with non-member countries, we found to our horror that our organization was neither recognized by the United Nations as a regional organization nor accorded a regular cooperation debate in this Assembly, unlike many of the other regional organizations. This was a particular surprise to us, because, as we have been reminded in this debate, the Council of Europe is the largest and the oldest of Europe's institutions, born, like the United Nations itself, out of the ashes of the last world war. It concerned us greatly, because of the valuable contributions which the Council of Europe has made and continues to make to the work of the United Nations.

Thus we are delighted that cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is being debated in this Assembly today for the very first time. And so we pay tribute to the Italian presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for enabling it to take place, and to the untiring work of our Danish rapporteur, Hanne Severinsen.

The Brahimi report (A/55/305) has launched a new debate on the prevention of conflict. As I hope is no longer disputed, the best prevention of conflict is the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. There are few, if any, examples of a democracy in conflict with another democracy, and it is here that we believe the Council of Europe can make a major contribution to the work of the United Nations.

Since 1989 — over the past 12 years — the number of member States of the Council of Europe has increased from 23 to 41, and possibly it will be 45 next year. To accede to the Council of Europe a country must be committed to achieving our standards of democracy, to be subjected to the detailed scrutiny of its commitments and to accept the jurisdiction of our European Court of Human Rights. It is this unique experience of the working of our institutions and instruments and of our monitoring procedures which contributes to the prevention of conflict in Europe and which we believe can contribute much more to the work of the United Nations.

There are four specific examples of the contribution the Council of Europe makes to the work of the United Nations to which I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly.

First, the important work of our North-South Centre in Lisbon, which raises awareness in Europe to the problems of poverty and depravation throughout the world.

Secondly, the solution we believe we have produced to one of the final status issues to be resolved in the Middle East peace process — that of the three and a quarter million displaced Palestine refugees, over one million of whom live in the 59 camps run by the United Nations through its Relief and Works Agency. We believe that the Council of Europe's 1998 report on this issue offers a practical solution to this problem.

Thirdly, in the area of conflict prevention, the Council of Europe has delivered practical assistance to and support for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), most recently in providing a mission to observe the Kosovo regional elections. It has also cooperated with the United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina in providing human rights training to the judiciary and police and it contributes to the Stability Pact programme for South-Eastern Europe.

Fourthly, the forthcoming Council of Europe contribution to next year's United Nations Year of the Volunteer, which our Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee is currently preparing.

May I, in conclusion, draw the Assembly's attention to the fact that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is composed of national delegations who are members of our national Parliaments and it is this parliamentary dimension to the work of our organization which we believe has contributed to the relative peace and expanding democracy and human rights in Europe over the past fifty years. This parliamentary dimension, which we recommend, should now be introduced into the work of the United Nations as has been proposed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We believe that practical politicians can find new solutions when Governments have reached deadlock. And that is the clear message that I hope will result from this first historic debate on cooperation between our two organizations today.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I should like to begin by expressing our appreciation to the Italian delegation for introducing the draft resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, contained in document A/55/L.8, which my delegation has joined in sponsoring.

May I also welcome the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Schwimmer, and the delegation from the Council's Parliamentary Assembly.

The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 as the first political institution in Europe. The main aims of the organization are to achieve greater unity between its member States through cooperation in all fields, except military, and on the basis of shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Democracy, human rights, respect for the individual, security and stability and a Europe free from conflict are not in themselves new ideas. Born in Europe, they have achieved universal relevance and recognition beyond the borders of Europe itself. What is new, however, is that one can adopt and advocate these values through appropriate institutional arrangements. It is in that sense that the Council of Europe is both a means to an end, as well as a worthwhile objective in itself.

The end of the cold war era gave the countries of Central and Eastern Europe an historic opportunity to return to European values and ideals, to restore to democratic institutions the mechanisms needed to create the political dimension that would allow them to engage in dialogue, partnership and cooperation with all other existing democracies.

It should be noted that most of those countries did not miss this unique opportunity and succeeded in restoring democracy, which eventually made possible their accession to the Council of Europe.

In this context, we welcome the activities of the Council aimed at the support of the democratic processes in countries in transition and at providing all possible opportunities for greater involvement in European structures and affairs.

Armenia was among the countries that did not miss the opportunity. It did not undertake its own democratization process simply in order to join the Council. It does recognize, however, that, having started the process of reform, the need to consolidate its achievements, as well as the need to go further in a firm and irrevocable manner, requires that it seek to integrate itself into the institutional framework — that is, the Council. The Council is a model and an

inspiration as well as the guarantor of the legitimacy of our own undertakings on the road to democratization.

Over the past few years, we have attempted to maintain a steady course in preparing for our membership. In doing so, we have continued to look at the way in which those ahead of us have attempted to embody the values of the Council of Europe by making those values significant in the conduct of their own affairs.

In 1996, we applied to join the Council of Europe and earlier this year, on 29 June, at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council, Armenia's full membership was recommended to the Committee of Ministers, stating that Armenia is moving towards a democratic pluralist society in which human rights and the rule of law are respected and, in accordance with Article 4 of the Statute of the Council of Europe, is able and willing to pursue democratic reforms. The final decision is to be taken by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in one of its upcoming meetings.

We understand that there is a common view among members of the Council to invite Armenia and Azerbaijan together to join the Council. At the same time, there are some concerns and reservations on the part of several members with regard to Azerbaijan's accession to the Council following its parliamentary elections. Furthermore, there are calls by member States to make Azerbaijan's accession altogether contingent upon its handling of elections.

Armenia's support for the joint accession of Armenia and Azerbaijan notwithstanding, we are not likely to support any further linkage between the two countries beyond the date of Azerbaijan's parliamentary elections.

Given our past disappointing experience in this connection, we have serious concerns about further delays in Armenia's full membership. We would urge member States to de-link the two countries' membership issue and judge each country's qualification for membership on its own merits. We are not reluctant to admit that the South Caucasus is a subregion whose democratic restructuring is not yet fully complete. A stable and democratic South Caucasus is a work in progress. As in all work in progress its promise must not ignore the fragility of its emerging equilibrium. We recognize and welcome the constructive role that the Council of Europe can, and must, play to consolidate this equilibrium, but it must not, perhaps inadvertently, by uneven or inconsistent application of its principles, exacerbate existing imbalances.

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the United Nations started in 1951 with the Agreement between the Council of Europe and the Secretariat of the United Nations, which was updated in 1971. The Council provides the framework and the appropriate mechanism for protecting, promoting and implementing human rights and we acknowledge the contribution of the Council of Europe to the protection and the strengthening of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on the European continent, including its activities against racism and intolerance, the promotion of gender equality, social development and a common cultural heritage.

In recent years, the Council of Europe has been involved in renewed cooperation with the United Nations, mainly in relation to crisis situations in Europe. In 1993, the United Nations Office in Geneva, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe established the practice of holding tripartite high-level meetings to exchange information and to promote coordination of their activities in areas of common concern.

At the dawn of the new century it is very timely for the General Assembly to examine ways and means of further developing the already advanced cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 44/6, of 17 October 1989, I now call on the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr. Walter Schwimmer.

Mr. Schwimmer (Council of Europe): It is a great honour and privilege for me to be the first Secretary General of the Council of Europe to address the United Nations General Assembly. Today's debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe marks a breakthrough in the relations between our institutions. This is the occasion, I am convinced, to discuss how the Council of Europe can even better contribute concretely and specifically to the work of the United Nations. In other words, how can we increase our added value?

My sincere thanks go to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for having originally proposed this debate, and to Italy, currently chairing our Committee of Ministers, for having taken up the suggestion and having introduced the draft resolution before the Assembly. Important impetus was also provided by the permanent representative of Finland in Strasbourg.

This debate has already given an impressive and convincing description of what the Council of Europe stands for. Our Organization, which currently consists of 41 member States, first and foremost represents the Europe of shared values. The organization embodies the shared commitment of 800 million Europeans to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Sharing our values are the Council's non-European observer States — Canada, Japan, Mexico and the United States. We also value our cooperation with the Holy See, which enjoys a similar status.

Since the end of the cold war the Council of Europe has become a truly pan-European organization, with 17 new members having been admitted in the past decade. Our achievements include, notably, over 170 multilateral conventions, several of which are also open to non-member States. Next month we shall celebrate in Rome the fiftieth anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights, with its unique protection mechanism, which enables individuals to obtain binding court decisions on their complaints against member States.

Our increase in membership has been accompanied by a growing emphasis on cooperation and assistance programmes to strengthen democratic stability. In brief, through its standard-setting and democracy-building activities, the Council of Europe is making a major contribution to long-term conflict prevention in Europe. I do not need to convince the Assembly that such conflict prevention is at infinitely lower cost than conflict resolution. If other organizations are sometimes called upon to act as fire brigades, the Council of Europe can be considered as the fire prevention system. In addition, in recent times the Council of Europe has increasingly become involved in what the United Nations Brahimi report (A/55/305) refers to as peace-building, notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, and to some extent in Chechnya.

In which areas do the Council of Europe and the United Nations already cooperate? Let me give but a few examples. Together with the United Nations, we are actively engaged in fighting racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Last week, we organized the European Conference against racism and intolerance in preparation for next year's United Nations World Conference in South Africa. Close cooperation exists with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who was present for the entire Conference in Strasbourg last week, as well as with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Council of Europe made a significant contribution to the special sessions of the General Assembly this year on women and social development. We also intend to actively contribute to the forthcoming special session on the follow-up to the World Summit for Children.

Our Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which is the political assembly of local and regional politicians from our member countries, is assisting in the preparation for this General Assembly of a world charter of local self-government.

A clear expression of the Council of Europe's sharing the concern of the United Nations for democracy and human rights worldwide is its North-South Centre in Lisbon, which seeks to raise public awareness in Europe on global interdependence issues and to promote human rights, pluralist democracy and social cohesion in other parts of the world.

We cooperate on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina; in Kosovo we actively contribute to the work of the United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and, at UNMIK's request, we have assumed responsibility for the observation of the electoral process.

The President returned to the Chair.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan — who made a very valuable visit to the Council of Europe two weeks ago — was also in a position to appreciate, many combined efforts are already under way. However, I am convinced that those efforts could be intensified even more, and that they should be made more politically evident. Let me illustrate this by referring to some of our most pressing concerns at the moment.

Recent developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, like the fall of the Berlin Wall, herald the

beginning of a new era in European politics. The Council of Europe has therefore warmly welcomed the courageous choice by the Serbian people in favour of democracy. The Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and I have already invited the new President, Mr. Kostunica, to come to Strasbourg for high-level meetings at the beginning of November. I am very proud that he has accepted.

A Council of Europe delegation is at present in Belgrade to discuss future relations and possible assistance programmes with the new leadership. I am convinced, however, that the transition in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will be completed only when Mr. Milosević, the Butcher of the Balkans, is brought to justice. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan told the General Assembly last year, the key to deterring crimes against humanity lies in the battle against the impunity of the perpetrators.

While there are thus high hopes and expectations with regard to the Balkans, the fatally flawed elections in Belarus last Sunday showed that democracy has not yet won everywhere in Europe.

The situation in Chechnya, which is very serious, remains of particular concern. The Council of Europe has repeatedly expressed its grave concern about human rights violations there. A recent hearing of the Russian State Duma, which I was able to attend, made it clear that much remains to be done. The Council of Europe's most tangible contribution has been its assistance in the setting up of the office of the Special Representative of the Russian President for Human Rights in Chechnya, Mr. Vladimir Kalamanov. Although the office has made an encouraging start, the test of its success will be the effective follow-up it can give to the already over 4,000 complaints brought by the people of the region.

I also wish once more to express my concern about the fate of the more than 18,000 persons reported missing since the conflict began and the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons who live under very difficult circumstances. It is my sincere hope that the competent agencies of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations will soon be able to become fully operational in Chechnya.

Let me finally mention our neighbouring region, the Middle East, which has been the scene of such horrific events in recent days. In particular, the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, with which the Israeli Knesset has enjoyed observer status since 1957, has been very active in efforts to promote dialogue between the parties. It was, in fact, one of the first forums to bring Israeli legislators and Palestinian representatives together. We stand ready to make any contribution that may be deemed useful to facilitate the continuation of that dialogue following this week's agreement at Sharm el-Sheikh.

I opened my statement by asking how the Council of Europe could contribute even better to the work of the United Nations. I believe that recognition of the Council of Europe as a regional organization within the meaning of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter would be an important step forward. First, this would be a political acknowledgement of the contribution the organization makes to conflict prevention and peace-building in Europe. It would, furthermore, enhance the Council of Europe's role as a model for other continents in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Existing cooperation on the ground in areas such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo would obtain a clearer political mandate. Finally, it would add increased relevance to what I hope will be an annual discussion in the General Assembly about our contribution to the work of the United Nations.

In conclusion, let me thank all delegations that contributed to this important debate, and all delegations that associated themselves with the French statement on behalf of the European Union. Special hanks to go the delegations of our applicant countries — Armenia, Azerbaijan and Monaco — for their statements.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to the consideration of draft resolution A/55/L.8.

Before the Assembly proceeds to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.8: Azerbaijan, Canada, Japan, Monaco and the United States of America.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.8?

Draft resolution A/55/L.8 was adopted (resolution 55/3).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 170?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 181

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

The President: In accordance with the decision taken at its 37th plenary meeting, held on 19 October 2000, the General Assembly will now consider agenda item 181.

Mr. Bossière (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by welcoming the fact that the recent signing of the agreement governing relations between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons provides an opportunity for the General Assembly, for the first time, to take note in plenary meeting of the considerable progress towards the elimination of chemical weapons that has been made since the 1993 conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

I cannot overemphasize the importance that the European Union attaches to the Convention. The Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is one of the international community's outstanding steps forward in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation: for the first time, a treaty has created an international organization effectively to verify the elimination, within a specific timeframe, of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

The Convention's large number of States parties — 140 to date — and the many ratifications over the past year prove the international community's continued support for that instrument, and are particularly encouraging for disarmament. Thus, several continents, including Europe, are already fully covered by the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The European Union takes this opportunity to call upon States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as soon as possible, and reaffirms its support for efforts to attain universal adherence.

Strengthening the authority of the Treaty requires also that all States parties fulfil their obligations. Cooperation between States parties and the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has enabled that organization to make great progress in implementing the Convention. All States parties have submitted their initial declarations, and a strict and effective inspection system has been successfully put in place to verify the accuracy of those declarations. These accomplishments have increased transparency and have made it possible to create a climate of greater trust with respect to all matters related to chemical weapons.

The European Union wishes also to recall the importance it attaches to the destruction by chemical-weapon States of all their stockpiles of such weapons as soon as possible, and within the timeframe set out in the Convention. The European Union does not underestimate the difficulties faced by some States in allocating the resources necessary for the destruction of their chemical weapons. It has therefore decided, in the framework of its Joint Action of 17 December 1999, to allocate 5.9 million euros to help in the construction of a chemical weapons destruction plant in Russia. The European Union wishes nonetheless to stress that, by the terms of the Convention, responsibility, including financial responsibility, for the destruction of chemical-weapons stockpiles lies solely with the States possessing such stockpiles.

It seems particularly appropriate for the General Assembly to acknowledge and support the efforts made by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the area of disarmament. These efforts represent the best assurance we have that the twenty-first century will be free from the scourge of chemical weapons. In the shorter term, we hope also that the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will help give impetus to the negotiations currently under way in

Geneva on an effective protocol for strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention. The conclusion of these negotiations before the end of 2001, pursuant to the decision taken in 1996 by the parties to the negotiations, will contribute usefully to supplementing and strengthening the achievements of the Chemical Weapons Convention in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The President: I call on the representative of Egypt on a point of order.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt): My delegation has asked for the floor on a point of order to comment on certain procedural matters pertaining to agenda item 8 and to agenda item 181, which is entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons".

General Assembly document A/55/495 was distributed on 18 October 2000, and a decision was taken by the Assembly, during the morning of 19 October, to waive the seven-day rule. That does not give delegations ample time to consult with their capitals on such matters, taking into account the fact that the seven-day rule is rarely waived and that this is done only when the matters under consideration are urgent.

The 24-hour rule also was waived with respect to the decision to allow the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to speak from the rostrum. It is worth noting also that the First Committee was in session yesterday morning and that, accordingly, experts from that Committee could not attend the General Assembly plenary.

It is the wish of my delegation that the practice I have just described not constitute a precedent in future.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic on a point of order.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked to speak on a point of order to express its view on the procedure that was followed in dealing with item 181 on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons".

In this respect, my delegation wishes to clarify the following.

First, the letter contained in document A/55/495 was circulated yesterday, and the decision was also made yesterday. That document reached my delegation only this morning. I believe that the waiver of the seven-day rule for reasons of urgency, and the waiver of the 24-hour rule in order to allow the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to make a statement from the rostrum, are important issues. Sufficient time should have been given to the members to thoroughly consider this matter and prepare their responses.

Secondly, my delegation wonders about the reasons for the use of these waivers, in particular as the situation is not related to urgent matters that affect international peace and security. We believe that it would have been instructive and useful in this case to abide by the procedures and regulations of the General Assembly.

Thirdly, my delegation hopes that this will not constitute a precedent in the work of the General Assembly, in particular in relation to the OPCW and to the statement by its Director-General from the rostrum of the General Assembly.

The President: The statements made by the representatives of Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic will be reflected in the record of this meeting.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I should like to seize this opportunity to express my great appreciation to the Member States for their positive response to the request by my Government for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item 181, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons", and for allowing an oral debate to take place today.

My country has a special relationship with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). It is for this reason that I am taking the floor after the representative of France, who spoke on behalf of the European Union, associated countries and other countries.

Of course, we fully associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of France. We also support the draft resolution on the subject of chemical weapons that is under consideration in the First Committee. The Netherlands is proud and very

pleased to be the host country of the OPCW. We felt that it was our duty as host country to propose that the General Assembly be given the opportunity to react to the important event that occurred last Tuesday, 17 October. This was the signing of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW, a further milestone in the short history of the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and Their Destruction. It may be recalled that the Convention entered into force only in 1997 and that since that date the organization and its State parties have made significant progress towards the abolition of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, the destruction of existing stocks and the elimination of facilities for the production of chemical weapons. Thus, the OPCW contributes to eliminating real threats to international, as well as regional, peace and security.

With the creation of an effective verification regime, the Convention has set an important precedent in confidence-building and disarmament. We are convinced that the example set by the OPCW will continue to inspire States currently negotiating a similar regime to eliminate the threat of biological weapons. The Netherlands will do its part to help bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion before the end of 2001. To give the new organization for the prohibition of biological weapons a head start, we shall make sure that it benefits fully from the experience gained from working with its sister organization, the OPCW.

Mr. Snyder (United States of America): My delegation would like to thank Director-General Bustani for joining us today. We would also like to take this opportunity to applaud the conclusion of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). This Agreement marks the beginning of a closer working relationship between these two important organizations.

We are pleased to note that the Relationship Agreement also has practical benefits. One such benefit is the further facilitation of the work and travel of OPCW inspectors. This will assist OPCW inspectors in carrying out inspections expeditiously and efficiently.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to the legal offices of both the United Nations Secretariat and the OPCW Technical Secretariat for their hard work in helping to bring this Agreement to completion.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): After a long period of painstaking negotiation, the Chemical Weapons Convention — a unique multilateral disarmament treaty to eliminate an entire class of weapons of mass destruction — entered into force in 1997. The Chemical Weapons Convention, with 140 States parties on board, now enjoys a great deal of international support, legitimacy and relevance. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a newly established independent, autonomous international organization, has so far striven to achieve the objectives and purposes of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and to ensure the full implementation of its provisions.

Since its establishment, OPCW has conducted its activities, as provided for under the Convention, in an efficient manner, verifying the compliance of the States parties with their obligations, and, as an international forum, facilitating consultations and cooperation among the States parties. Since its ratification of the Convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the context of its long-standing commitment to the realization of the Convention, and as the most recent victim of these horrific weapons, has spared no effort to support the Convention and the implementation activities of the OPCW.

The tireless efforts and activities of the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Bustani, and his staff in the course of the implementation of the Convention deserve our appreciation and support. We therefore express our satisfaction with the inclusion of the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the OPCW on the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly and welcome the presence of Director-General Bustani of the OPCW here today.

The signature at this important juncture of the Relationship Agreement between the two organizations, in accordance with the Convention, is, in our view, a major step towards facilitating the implementation of the Convention. The Islamic Republic of Iran was actively involved in the negotiations on this Agreement. Following intensive discussions within the OPCW and with the constructive

involvement of the United Nations Secretariat, the differences over some aspects of the Agreement were ultimately resolved in a spirit of cooperation and understanding. We are pleased that this Agreement has now been signed by the two organizations and is well placed for implementation.

The common objective of the two organizations — to achieve effective progress towards general and complete disarmament — will be widely promoted through the consolidation of their relationship. In this regard, securing universality, as one of the basic pillars upon which the Convention was founded, is a necessity. In the Middle East region in particular, there is still much to be done to secure the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This will require the two organizations to utilize their available means of cooperation to guarantee universal adherence to the Convention.

Mr. Xu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to welcome the inclusion on the agenda of the current session the item regarding the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Since the Chemical Weapons Convention came into effect more than three years ago, progress has been steady in the implementation of the Convention. The efforts made by the Secretariat of the OPCW, under the leadership of the Director-General, Mr. Bustani, have created an auspicious beginning for achieving a comprehensive ban on and the elimination of chemical weapons. The universality of the Convention has been strengthened. There are now 140 States parties and 34 States signatories to the Convention. The majority of States parties have submitted their declarations, as stipulated in the Convention. Countries in possession of chemical weapons have destroyed large quantities of such weapons under the supervision of the OPCW. The OPCW has made more than 700 inspection visits to more than 30 States parties. Other work has also been properly undertaken.

We congratulate the OPCW on its accomplishments. We are eagerly waiting to hear the statement to be made today by Mr. Bustani, the Director-General of the OPCW.

The OPCW, an international organization in charge of the prohibition and destruction of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, has been playing a very important role in promoting international peace and security. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OPCW is highly important. That cooperation will effectively promote the relationship between the United Nations and the OPCW, thus enabling the latter to play an even more significant role in the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of arms control and disarmament.

China has always promoted the comprehensive prohibition and destruction of all weapons of mass destruction, including all chemical weapons. The Convention laid the foundation of international law for the achievement of this goal. As one of the original States parties, China has faithfully and strictly implemented its obligations under the Convention; we will continue to make our best efforts for the achievement of all the goals and principles of the Convention.

Even though great progress has been made in implementing the Convention, it must be noted that there are still issues in its implementation that cannot be ignored. Some important countries in certain regions have not ratified the Convention. Certain countries have expressed their reservations on the Convention's important and substantive articles by adopting their own national legislation. Many issues are still left unresolved after the adoption of the Convention.

More attention must continue to be paid to the destruction and verification of abandoned chemical weapons. In accordance with the Convention, there should be comprehensive cooperation between countries in the chemicals trade and in exchanges of chemical technologies. We would like to take this opportunity to appeal to those countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Convention to do so at an early date. We also hope that all of the Member States will completely and faithfully implement their obligations under the Convention in order to achieve fully its goals.

Mr. Westdal (Canada): Canada is pleased that we all have a chance to discuss the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in this forum. This key, still young, treaty has already contributed much to global security.

In force only since 1997, the Convention will soon have gained the backing of 140 States, a highly significant achievement. Important gaps, nonetheless, remain, particularly in the Middle East, in Latin

America and in Africa. For Canada's part, in close cooperation with the Organization of American States, we have worked hard in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote universality. We strongly encourage all States to join.

The Convention, the first multilateral agreement to ban an entire category of weapons, includes detailed provisions for verification. These involve national reporting or declarations concerning the use of chemicals covered by the Convention, along with on-site inspections by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Compliance in the submission of declarations is now excellent, and hundreds of inspections have taken place. The system works.

A unique feature of this Convention is that industry is directly involved, submitting the required information to Governments, obtaining authorizations for imports and exports and receiving inspections. Industry has thus become an essential partner in fulfilling the international community's determination that chemicals should be used only for peaceful, non-prohibited purposes. We recognize and much appreciate this practical commitment and support for our goal.

An important obligation of the Convention is the destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles by former possessor States. We welcome the progress already made, and we urge all such States parties to meet the deadline specified in the Convention. There will be much good reason to rejoice when such stockpiles — surely abuses of human genius and industry — are things of the past.

Canada is very supportive of the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons under the leadership of Director-General Bustani. At the same time, we recognize that several key issues affecting the organization itself, and the fully effective implementation of the Convention, are yet to be resolved. We remain actively committed to the achievement of consensus solutions.

Finally, today's debate is particularly timely, given the signature earlier this week of the welcomed Relationship Agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations. We look forward to an annual opportunity to discuss this vital Convention. But, much more, we look forward to — and will work hard to hasten — the happy day of its universality.

Ms. Assumpçao-Pereira (Brazil) *(spoke in Spanish)*: We are very gratified to speak in the discussion on the new agenda item, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)", introduced on the initiative of the delegation of the Netherlands.

Two days ago, the Southern Common Market countries and Bolivia and Chile spoke in the plenary meeting of the First Committee on the item entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". Our countries highlighted the progress made in implementing this key instrument for disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which has already been ratified or acceded to by 140 States. We welcome the fraternal countries of Mozambique, Gabon and Jamaica among the newest members of the organization. This serves to bolster the objective of giving the Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons the desirable breadth and universality.

Brazil, which played a constructive part in the negotiations on the Relationship Agreement between OPCW and the United Nations, is very gratified by the signing of the document on 17 October. In the context of the objectives of peace, security and development, as articulated in the Charter of this universal Organization, the Relationship Agreement between OPCW and the United Nations represents the culmination of a process of establishing and consolidating the non-proliferation and disarmament regime for chemical weapons, developed under the OPCW's responsibility.

The Agreement sets out to coordinate efforts and to harmonize the activities and objectives of the two organizations. This strengthens them and expands their ability to act for the benefit of the international community.

Let us not forget that the OPCW is the product of the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Now, with no diminution of its autonomous, distinct character, it is beginning to operate as a branch of the United Nations system. Thus in the matter of international peace and security the United Nations now has adequate means — recognized as impartial and efficient — to act with increasing legitimacy to

promote the disarmament and non-proliferation regime in this important sector of weapons of mass destruction — chemical weapons. With regard to cooperation for development, the cooperation between the two bodies offers promising prospects for the chemical industry and for the use of scientific and technical knowledge for peaceful purposes.

On his recent visit to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, highlighted the fact that at the first OPCW conference Brazil had volunteered one of its most talented diplomats to serve as the OPCW's first Director-General. The President said that Brazil understood that the renewal of the term of office of Ambassador José Maurício Bustani as the head of the OPCW was also a sign of the recognition of the constructive role played by Brazil in addressing international security issues.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW are examples of the high level of understanding attained by the international community. But much remains to be done if we are to achieve by 2007 the objective of destroying all existing chemical arsenals throughout the world. Therefore, in addition to cooperation in the area of science and technology, we advocate using the machinery of the Convention to promote the legitimacy of international controls over sensitive chemical substances. Failure to do so would be to undermine this model disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. We are convinced that the signing of the relationship agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations will enable us to make headway in this direction.

Mr. Sood (India): India welcomes the conclusion of the relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are confident that it will further facilitate the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which has now been in force for almost three and a half years.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a unique disarmament agreement. In our view, it is unique because it is a multilaterally negotiated disarmament agreement, the first of its kind, that is comprehensive in its scope, universal in its applicability, non-discriminatory in character and backed by an international verification system that is the first of its kind in both detail and complexity.

We are aware that the negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention took many years, and that the negotiations themselves — which lasted for nearly 10 years — were preceded by extensive preparations. India participated actively in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We were active participants in the Preparatory Commission and were among the original signatories. We were an original State party and also had the privilege to serve as the first Chairman of the Executive Council when the Convention entered into force.

Of the nearly 700 inspections that have been carried out, more than 40 have been conducted in India by the Technical Secretariat since the Convention's entry into force. They have been conducted in a professional manner. The smooth conduct of such inspections — both those related to chemical weapons and those related to industry — is essential for enhancing confidence in the verification regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The destruction of chemical weapons and the provision of chemical weapons destruction facilities, the principal objective of the Convention, are proceeding well. Implementation of industry verification has been moving smoothly now that most of the significant countries have submitted their industry declarations. Universality has improved; there are now 140 States parties to the Convention.

Yet there remain other areas of concern. Achieving a greater degree of universality of States parties is one area with which all States parties are concerned. To us, given that we are also engaged in negotiations on a protocol relating to the Biological Weapons Convention, another area of concern is the somewhat tardy implementation of article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is absolutely essential that such treaties, which are unique, for the reasons I have given, be implemented fully and completely, in order to ensure that they can serve as models; we have dealt with one category of weapons of mass destruction, so such treaties can be a model for dealing effectively with all other categories of weapons of mass destruction.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I begin by welcoming the presence of Ambassador Bustani, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Argentina attaches particular importance to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In the context of this policy, we were an active participant in the negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. An example of our stance was the Mendoza Declaration, adopted in 1991, by which Argentina, Brazil and Chile committed themselves, before the conclusion of the negotiations, to the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Ecuador have since associated themselves with that Declaration.

Therefore, Argentina salutes the work of the OPCW and of its Director-General, Ambassador Bustani. We welcome the signing of the agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW. We have no doubt that we are moving in the right direction to rid the world of these horrendous weapons.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 37th plenary meeting yesterday, 19 October 2000, I now give the floor to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. José Bustani.

Mr. Bustani (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): I am pleased to address the General Assembly on this special occasion, adding my voice as Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to the hundreds of others that are shaping the global agenda at the dawn of a new millennium. It is a special responsibility that requires me to speak from the heart.

I would like to thank the delegation of the Netherlands, the host country of the OPCW, for its timely initiative to request the inclusion of this additional item on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly.

I am honoured, Mr. President, to speak to the United Nations on behalf of the OPCW in your presence, given Finland's unwavering support for the work of the Organization. I would like, in particular, to acknowledge the active contribution of the former President of Finland, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, to the quest for the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Numerous challenges mentioned in the United Nations Millennium Declaration demand not simply attention, but united, prompt and decisive action on the part of the leaders of all nations, be they large or small. Addressing these challenges also requires wisdom and vision on the part of those whom humankind has entrusted with the international coordination of such efforts. Only the dedicated symbiosis of the political will of States with the commitment and dedication of international institutions can bring about the successful resolution of these burning problems.

The unprecedented gathering of world leaders in New York last month demonstrated that the age of confusion and doubt about the role and the functions of multilateral mechanisms may be drawing to a close. The turn of the millennium regenerated hope for a new era of togetherness in the international community. The world's rapidly growing interdependence, the increased transparency of national boundaries, the information revolution, a shared perception of the universality of environmental concerns, and other factors, have combined to produce the reality and the concept of globalization. While the benefits of globalization must be shared more equally, globalization itself is also evidence that it is simply no longer possible for some matters to be dealt with by individual States or groups of States. We have entered the millennium of multilateral solutions.

One area in which the world has to speak with one voice is international security. The cold war drew to a close more than a decade ago. Yet it would be unimaginable to proclaim that the threat to world peace is now a thing of the past. In the broad spectrum of other challenges, such as global epidemics, regional conflicts, nationalist hatred, religious violence and terrorism, one of the very real dangers to human survival still emanates from the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

In spite of a number of well-known setbacks, humankind can still be proud of its impressive record of achievement in curbing this danger. The total number of nuclear weapons is at its lowest level in 20 years. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which imposed real limitations on the proliferation and modernization of nuclear weapons, has been concluded. Efforts to create an efficient verification regime for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention are in their final stages, although their end result is still uncertain.

Nuclear weapons have traditionally dominated the disarmament agenda. Moreover, the past decade has seen an increased awareness of the dangers of biological warfare. Yet I would submit that, short of an Armageddon scenario, the threat to human life from chemical weapons is still probably the greatest. This is because, in a world which is no longer hostage to super-Power confrontation, chemical weapons, compared to nuclear and biological weapons, remain the most usable weapon of mass destruction and can be produced with relative ease and at a relatively low cost.

Nevertheless, I am proud to state that, in the field of chemical disarmament, multilateral efforts have — quietly but effectively — already made a real difference and are continuing to do so. Now that the OPCW will regularly report to the General Assembly, more will be known about our contribution to the cause of global disarmament and about the positive example which the OPCW provides for other present and future legal instruments and verification regimes.

The fact that the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force on 29 April 1997 and has been successfully implemented for three and a half years is a remarkable achievement. Never before has humankind embarked on such an ambitious undertaking in the field of disarmament, aiming not just at reductions, restrictions, confidence-building and non-proliferation, but at the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. The creation of the OPCW in the beautiful city of The Hague, a well-established and growing international centre of admirable reputation, and of National Authorities in its member States to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Convention — both nationally and internationally — is a unique multilateral disarmament experiment, an experiment which has so far been a complete success.

The degree of global trust and confidence in the Chemical Weapons Convention and in the OPCW is best illustrated by the rapid and continuing increase in its membership. The OPCW has grown from 87 States parties upon entering into force to 139 today. On 1 November, Yemen will become the 140th State party, following recent similar actions taken by Gabon, Jamaica and Kiribati during the Millennium Assembly. A more than 60-per-cent increase in membership in three and a half years is without precedent in the history of verifiable disarmament instruments. The trust and confidence which the international community has placed in us must and will be honoured.

Historically speaking, three and a half years are a short period. Yet in business terms, they mark the threshold at which a sound undertaking must begin to demonstrate its viability. Patience is undeniably a virtue in international relations, yet patience should not be confused with inaction. We must be patient in waiting for results. However, we must be impatient when it comes to taking action.

The OPCW already has a lot to show for its three and a half years because of its forceful and impatient resolve to achieve what it was established to achieve. One half of the 61 chemical-weapons production plants declared to the organization by 11 States parties have been either destroyed or converted for peaceful purposes. Seven per cent of the world's declared stockpile of 70,000 tonnes of chemical agents and 15 per cent of the 8.4 million chemical munitions covered by the Convention have also been destroyed. All declared chemical weapons have been inventoried and all declared chemical-weapons production facilities have been inactivated. All are subject to a verification regime of unprecedented stringency. A total of 850 inspections have taken place in 44 States parties since April 1997, including 300 inspections at civilian chemical plants, to ensure that they engage only in non-chemical-weapons-related activities. These inspections are continuing as I speak. Following the submission of the United States industry declaration in the first half of this year, the United States chemical industry is now subject to an intensive industry inspection schedule which is proceeding extremely well and has met the full support of chemical manufacturers and of the United States National Authority. For an organization with a little more than 500 staff members from 66 countries, including 200 inspectors, and which operates on an annual budget of only $55 million, these are impressive results.

At the same time, it would be inappropriate to use the rostrum of the General Assembly to talk only of the OPCW's successes. It is also my responsibility as the Director-General of the OPCW to inform the Assembly of significant challenges and obstacles to the effective and timely implementation of its mandate.

The immediate raison d'être of the OPCW is the worldwide elimination of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons and the prevention of their re-emergence anywhere. This objective will be realized only when all chemical weapons currently in existence

have been verified as destroyed and when all countries have joined the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The biggest challenge to the Convention's credibility comes today from the difficulties experienced by the Russian Federation in its attempts to destroy, in accordance with the Convention's timetables, its gigantic chemical weapons legacy inherited from the former Soviet Union. A significant delay in the destruction of the world's largest arsenal of chemical weapons may call into question the credibility of the Convention and could undermine the entire effort to rid the planet of these horrific weapons. Russia has already requested and received the approval of the OPCW Conference of the States Parties for a delay in the destruction of 1 per cent of its chemical weapons, which was originally due to be completed by 29 April this year. Even though the Russian Federation has already started destroying specialized components for chemical weapons, the actual destruction of chemical agents is scheduled to begin, at the earliest, in the first half of next year. The first and so far only full-scale chemical-weapons destruction facility in Russia will be commissioned even later, at the end of 2001.

While the magnitude of the problem facing the Russian Federation is truly immense, the reality highlights the need for further urgent and carefully coordinated action on the part of the Russian Government. International assistance, the need for which is beyond doubt, will be provided in sufficient quantity only in the context of an updated action plan yet to be drawn up by Russia itself. There is an urgent need for Russia to make fundamental policy decisions about how it intends to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile at minimum cost and with adequate measures in place to protect its people and its environment. I was heartened to learn that the Russian Government just a few days ago decided where to locate the seat of its National Authority — the body charged with the national implementation of the Convention. I am sure that the new National Authority — and its dedicated Director-General, Mr. Zinoviy Pak, charged with this responsibility by President Putin himself — will immediately take the much needed steps to breathe new life into the Russian chemical weapons destruction programme. I wish him every success and assure him of our full support.

I also welcome the steps already taken by a number of countries to assist Russia to destroy its chemical weapons. It is a fact, however, that the offers of such assistance fall far short of the need for them. This highlights another element which has been absent over the past several years, namely, a mechanism for the efficient coordination of international assistance to the Russian Federation. My proposal to establish a steering committee, which would regularly meet at the OPCW to monitor the progress of destruction and to identify gaps in the Russian resources which can only be filled from the outside, has been accepted by Russia, but has yet to be endorsed by donor countries. I am convinced that such a working steering committee would help to get things moving. It might also provide the international oversight which would allow the major donor — the United States — to persuade Congress to restore its funding to assist the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia.

However, destroying chemical weapons is only part of the solution to the problem which they pose. The Convention will not ultimately prevail until all States have formally committed themselves to it. A total of 34 signatory States still have to ratify the Convention, while an additional 19 countries have yet to accede to it. I keep asking myself the same question: if the reasons for delaying accession are not bureaucratic in nature, what are they? If these reasons are unrelated to chemical weapons, then we perhaps need to take a fresh look at the whole issue of accession.

Of the utmost concern is the situation in the Middle East, where Israel, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates and, of course, Iraq still remain outside the CWC. This concern is further reinforced by the spiralling cycle of violence which once again threatens the fragile peace process, with dangerous ramifications for regional stability and security and possibly for stability and security outside that region as well. After all, it was in the Middle East that chemical weapons were most recently used against both combatants and civilians. Heightened tensions in the region are calling into question the strategy which calls for a peace settlement before other elements contributing to such a settlement can even be discussed. What is wrong with taking a series of steps which would help to generate a climate of confidence amongst the key players in that region and which would demonstrate the genuine willingness of all parties to seek such a comprehensive settlement in parallel with peace negotiations?

Perhaps the time has come for all of the countries I have just mentioned to review the approaches which they have been pursuing with regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the regional security agenda in general. Would the security situation in the Middle East improve if all actors were confident that the sword of Damocles of the possible use of chemical weapons was no longer hanging over their heads? Would not an initiative to accede to the Convention, together with other steps, create a political momentum in which movement on other elements of the security equation would be forthcoming?

The fact that Yemen, Jordan and Sudan have already elected to subscribe to precisely this view indicates that such an approach is not unrealistic in the Middle East environment. Much now depends on the next steps to be taken by other key players. What is needed for the gradual establishment in this region of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, as proposed by Egypt? Would not accession to the CWC be one of these steps, and a fundamental one at that? I wholeheartedly trust the wisdom of the Egyptian leadership on this issue.

By virtue of signing the Convention, Israel has already, under article I, entered into an obligation, inter alia, not to develop, produce or stockpile chemical weapons. What, then, is preventing it from ratifying the Convention and codifying its political commitment in legal terms?

Equally, much depends on the active contribution of the United States and of other major Powers and groups of States which have made the pursuit of a Middle East peace settlement one of the cornerstones of their foreign policy. I, for one, am ready to visit the region at an appropriate time to explore with the leadership the security issues I have mentioned.

I also express the hope that the leaders of the future Palestinian State will not hesitate to set the record straight from the outset, and will accede to not merely the Chemical Weapons Convention, but also other global arms control and disarmament treaties. A public statement of their position in this regard would contribute significantly to progress on this issue.

Another region of concern is Africa, where Angola, Somalia and Sao Tome and Principe remain outside the Convention, while Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia have yet to ratify the treaty. Africa's problems are many. However, Mozambique's decision to accede to the Convention earlier this year proves that these very real problems are not necessarily an impediment to acceding to the CWC. This is all the more true because the Convention does not confine itself to the issue of chemical weapons, but is also about promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry and helping to develop national expertise in pharmaceuticals, pesticides, fertilizers etc.

This brings me to a fundamental question. What incentive would a small country have to accede to the CWC when it has neither chemical weapons nor a chemical industry to speak of? The answers to this question are many. While a country may not have chemical weapons, it may, in particular in some regions, be subject to an attack with chemical weapons for as long as such weapons continue to exist. The Convention provides for assistance and protection to its States parties in the event of such attacks. What is perhaps even more important is that it also calls, in article XI, paragraph 2 (c) for States parties to:

> "Not maintain among themselves any restrictions ... which would restrict or impede trade and the development and promotion of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of chemistry for industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical, or other peaceful purposes".

In addition, the Convention provides for an expanding regime of restrictions in trade in chemicals applied by States parties towards those States which have chosen to stay out. The chemicals affected by this expanding regime have an increasingly broad range of commercial applications.

In the three and a half years of its existence, the CWC has undoubtedly proven its effectiveness as a confidence-building measure and has provided an unprecedented and much needed forum for States parties to address any concerns they may have about the compliance of other States parties. To this end, in addition to the verification activities of the OPCW itself, a number of States parties have already made use of the various mechanisms under article IX of the Convention in relation to consultation, cooperation and fact finding. As more States accede to the CWC, and as their chemical producers support it, the arguments

originally advanced for the continuing maintenance of restrictions on chemicals outside a credible, reliable international legal framework become increasingly redundant. Given this fact, the continuing existence of export controls by some States parties against others is hard to understand and very difficult to justify. I therefore urge those that still retain such controls to re-evaluate the need for them in the light of the factors I have just outlined, with a view to removing them as soon as possible. Moreover, restrictions other than those agreed by the international community as a whole could undermine the very legal pillars of any ongoing and future multilateral effort in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

While the CWC is sometimes perceived only as a disarmament and non-proliferation treaty, it has a third and fourth pillar of equal importance. Without them, the Convention would never have come into being. These two pillars are assistance in the area of protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons and international cooperation. The OPCW is vigorously pursuing international cooperation projects. With the participation of the Governments of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, we have just launched an innovative programme which targets scientists and engineers from developing countries. A major component of what we call the "OPCW Associate Programme" relates to the development of the skills and experience required to operate effectively in the context of the modern chemical industry.

The programme is supported by a number of chemical companies which are prepared to take in trainees and to involve them in their daily activities. In addition, intensive training in aspects of chemical manufacturing, plant safety, and the operations of chemical companies is provided at a university facility in the United Kingdom. As the programme proves its success, it could be expanded — and I plan to do that — to a regional level with individual projects for Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The Convention has to remain flexible if it is to respond adequately to new threats and challenges. It already has a mechanism for responding to dangerous scientific and technological developments. It should also have the capacity to provide effective instruments to cope with human threats. I am talking here of chemical terrorism. This is a global threat, and any effective cure must also be global in nature. Even before universality is achieved, I believe that the Convention could be made much more effective by using its institutional and political framework to establish greatly enhanced links and cooperation between national anti-terrorism agencies and disaster relief organizations. These are, of course, suggestions which could be pursued further at the CWC Review Conference in 2002, hopefully with the participation of those countries that now still remain outside of the regime.

To be fully efficient and successful any international organization must be adequately funded. I mentioned earlier that the rapidly increasing membership of the OPCW testifies to the international community's trust and confidence that it has done a good job, and that it will continue to do so. The Organization must be adequately funded if it is to deliver on the increasing demands which are being made of it — be it in the areas of disarmament and verification, or in the field of international cooperation and assistance. Any significant widening of the gap between the financial resources and the Convention-mandated responsibilities of the OPCW could eventually damage the credibility of the Organization and might slow down, if not reverse, its momentum towards universality.

The relationship agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations, which was signed just a few days ago, opens up possibilities for broad-ranging cooperation. I intend to maximize these opportunities to the fullest extent possible. Only with the active assistance of the United Nations will the OPCW be able to implement its mandate with a maximum of efficiency and transparency. The Chemical Weapons Convention is the child of the United Nations. The United Nations is responsible — in loco parentis — for ensuring the well-being and success of its offspring. On behalf of the OPCW, I would also like to express my gratitude to the Office of Legal Affairs, and to Mr. Hans Corell, for the support, flexibility and understanding which the United Nations consistently demonstrated during these negotiations.

The OPCW has four mandates — disarmament, non-proliferation, assistance and protection, and international cooperation. It will fulfil all of these mandates when it achieves universality. I hope that, as chemical weapons are destroyed, States Parties will be prepared gradually to place on the promotion of the peaceful use of chemistry at least the same emphasis and resources as are required for the maintenance of a

reliable non-proliferation regime. From an organization created to rid the world of chemical weapons, the OPCW would ultimately evolve into an organization to promote the use of chemistry for the benefit of all nations. This would be an evolution reflecting the world's self-transformation, from confrontation and distrust into the productive pursuit of peace and prosperity for all humankind.

The President: I thank the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

We have heard the last speaker in the debate of this item for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation listened to the statement by Mr. Bustani, the Director-General of the OPCW, and the unilateral view of Egypt included in the statement.

We wish to clarify certain facts regarding those paragraphs of Mr. Bustani's statement that dealt with the situation in the Middle East.

First, it is clear that Egypt has not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention — although we have adhered to its provisions — because of Israel's non-adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), despite the continuous demand for it to do so, the last time being during the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT.

Secondly, Egypt is ready to accede to the Convention when Israel accedes to the NPT.

Thirdly, Egypt's position, which is crystal clear, has been referred to in many forums. Since Mr. Bustani is aware of the facts, especially in the Middle East, he should have reflected this in an appropriate and balanced manner when addressing the Assembly, but unfortunately he has become accustomed to an incomplete view, which we saw last at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, when Egypt had to resort to the right of reply to set the record straight.

Fourthly, Egypt rejects chemical weapons as well as all weapons of mass destruction, as has been reflected clearly and at the highest level in President Mubarak's initiative to free the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, I repeat, all weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, this has also been clearly reflected in the relevant resolutions put forward by Egypt in the First Committee.

In conclusion, we wish to confirm that genuine wisdom requires balanced and specific treatment of weapons of mass destruction and it is important to note that Mr. Bustani's statement has not shown that.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, there is a close relationship among disarmament conventions, especially those dealing with a single category like weapons of mass destruction. Disregarding this fact is indeed a reflection of selectivity and exacerbates the problems instead of solving them.

We would have liked Mr. Bustani's statement to have referred to this fact.

Secondly, the international community has given priority to weapons of mass destruction, foremost among which are nuclear weapons, whose elimination is demanded in documents of the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. These related to disarmament in the nuclear field.

All Arab States have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) while Israel has not. There is a veritable sword of Damocles hanging over the States of the region and over members of the international community. That sword takes the form of the nuclear weapons possessed by Israel, namely, over 200 nuclear bombs and their means of delivery, and its policy of expansion at the expense of Arab territory. That is the real danger.

It behoves the international community to seek to implement international agreements and United Nations resolutions regarding Israel's accession to the NPT, as well as Security Council resolution 487 (1981). The policy of double standards is indeed futile: those who seek real peace in the region must deal with existing problems and realities in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. Mekdad (Syria) (*spoke in Arabic*): We apologize for taking the floor at this late hour. However, my delegation was surprised to observe that

the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has chosen to twist facts and to disregard the real situation in the Middle East in his remarks about armaments and the elimination of chemical weapons. We do not know on what principles Mr. Bustani bases his comments when he attacks some countries' decisions regarding accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Does Mr. Bustani not know that decisions of this nature are based on the current state of affairs in various regions? Does he not know that Israel is armed to the teeth with chemical and nuclear weapons and the most advanced aircraft and tanks? Mr. Bustani is misled. Indeed, he has gone in the wrong direction in his statement. The stark reality before the General Assembly is that Israel has limited itself to signing the Convention; it has not ratified it and has therefore not acceded to it.

Addressing the General Assembly is a responsibility that must be assumed sincerely by representatives of international organizations. We do not believe Mr. Bustani has taken that approach. His statement was merely a simplistic analysis of the overall political situation in the Middle East and was in no way a reflection of the actual facts nor of the positions of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In fact, if his statement illustrates anything it is that Mr. Bustani is completely ignorant of the situation in the Middle East.

He has adopted a selective policy in making his statement. According to Mr. Bustani's assertions, 34 countries have not ratified the Convention, while 19 States have yet to accede to it. This raises questions in our minds and indicates that the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons should make additional efforts throughout the world, rather than focus on a single region. It is true that the situation in the Middle East is complex, but we should identify the source of the problem rather than address the situation in a suspicious way.

The one party responsible for dragging the Middle East into a spiral of violence is Israel. Mr. Bustani used silk gloves in describing the situation and Israel's position, although he knows quite well that Israel has not genuinely adopted any practical, political or legal measures with regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. His statement does not differ from Israel's statements or the positions it has taken. His statement reflects a complete bias in favour of Israel's attitude. It does not behove an international official to mislead the international community in such a way.

The undeniable truth known to everyone is that Israel alone is responsible for the escalation of the arms race in the Middle East. Israel publicly refuses to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In fact, it is the only country in the region that has, under flimsy pretexts, not acceded to the NPT — to say nothing of other important conventions.

It is the Arabs who need reassurance and security. Their land is under occupation, and Israeli armed forces threaten them with nuclear and chemical weapons and all sorts of internationally prohibited arms — weapons that Israel has used against Lebanon and Palestine, among other places. What the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons should do is to deal with the issues on the basis of facts, and not on the basis of its Director-General's misguided accusations levelled at the wrong parties in total disregard of his role. That role is to prohibit all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, starting with nuclear weapons.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): I would first like to begin my short statement by thanking the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for his statement. Israel views the unique Chemical Weapons Convention — which has given global security a significant objective, namely, the total elimination of chemical weapons — as a very important Convention. However, I am surprised that some of the representatives here have chosen to try to deride the topic under discussion and to deal with issues that are not at all part of the debate in this meeting.

Our Foreign Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres, stated when Israel signed the Convention, in 1993, that there is no weapon against weapons of mass destruction, only political determination. The fact that Israeli citizens are obliged to be equipped with chemical-weapon-protection gear is itself proof of the degree of threat to our citizens, in particular of the threat from countries in the region that are notorious for their use and possession of chemical weapons.

It is not a coincidence that the two countries that have questioned the procedures for convening this meeting did not on the other hand even question the

procedure for convening the tenth emergency special session. One might suspect that those objections emanate from a well-known position of Syria and Egypt, which has been reflected in their reluctance even to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention as they continue to possess those weapons.

Israel signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in January 1993, and is obligated under international law to the moral principle of global chemical disarmament. At the signature ceremony, Israel expressed its hope that other countries in the region would follow suit; the reality, unfortunately, is in stark contrast to that. These circumstances certainly pose difficulties in terms of taking the decision whether to ratify the Convention or not. Israel hopes that the environment in the Middle East, in which hostility and non-recognition are still prevalent, will change soon in a manner that will enable Israel to take the decision to ratify the Convention.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation listened carefully to the statement by Mr. Bustani, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and I took special note of what he said about the situation in the Middle East; he said that Libya was among several States in the region that had not yet acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Let me stress that my country is now a party to most international disarmament conventions, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), because Libya wishes to participate in international efforts to put an end to the production of weapons of mass destruction. My country has made clear in all international forums the reason why Libya has yet to join the Chemical Weapons Convention: the security imbalance in the Middle East resulting from the fact that Israel possesses hundreds of nuclear warheads and has to date refused, in spite of constant international appeals, to accede to the NPT or to place its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system.

Mr. Bustani addressed only part of the situation in the Middle East when he named several States and indicated that they were still outside the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. But he ought to have mentioned the reasons why those States have not yet adhered to the Convention. He is well acquainted with those reasons, because those States — including, as I have said, Libya — have explained why they have not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have explained this in the General Assembly and in other international forums, and we might have hoped that Mr. Bustani would have mentioned the true reasons for those States not having acceded to the Convention.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to respond to the statement of the representative of Israel a moment ago. After listening to his statement, everyone can see clearly that Israel does indeed possess chemical weapons and that it considers the possession and stockpiling of such weapons to be a means of providing security for its citizens. If every State in the world followed that obviously unacceptable Israeli logic, there would be no international conventions on the prohibition of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, because every country would offer the excuse that it had to protect the safety and security of its citizens.

This proves again that the Arabs are the Middle Eastern parties that actually need security and safety. The Arabs do not possess nuclear weapons with which to defend themselves; nor do they possess other categories of weapons that can counter the challenges laid down by Israel as it occupies Arab lands and suppresses Arab citizens in those occupied territories.

I was surprised to hear the Israeli representative's fantastical comparison when two delegations objected to the procedures used to consider the item before us, and to the content of the statement of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons: how could he compare this to the emergency special session on the massacres inflicted on the Palestinian people? That reflects Israel's aggressive nature and its defiance of the international community. In fact, convening an emergency special session was the minimum we could do to put an end to the massacres inflicted upon the Palestinian people.

Once more, we come back to one constant fact: there can be no peace in the Middle East without a commitment by Israel to the resolutions adopted by the international community, and without Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied territories to the borders of 4 June 1967. Israel must give up its dream of dominating the region by threatening to use or using weapons of mass destruction. The international community bears primary responsibility to pressure Israel to take genuine action to achieve a just, lasting

and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to enable us all to work towards the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons and chemical weapons.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The representative of Israel criticized Egypt's observation on the need to abide by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. He linked that with the Assembly's decision to resume the tenth emergency special session. We wonder about the connection between the two issues. The resumption by the General Assembly of the tenth emergency special session is a matter that has been decided upon, and the debate on this vital and important issue will resume this afternoon.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): I am sorry that I have to speak once again in exercise of the right of reply. I promise to be very brief.

I listened to the statement made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in exercise of the right of reply, and I fail to understand the logic behind his words. The fact that Israeli citizens are obliged to be equipped with safety gear to protect themselves from chemical weapons does not indicate anything whatsoever about Israel's capabilities of any kind. The fact is that Israeli citizens were, and still are, under the threat of chemical weapons, inter alia, from countries like his own.

The second point I wish to raise is that I would ask the Syrian representative, and even recommend to him, that he not lecture us about massacres and that he should not speak on behalf of the Palestinians. These issues are rather serious and are under consideration between us and the Palestinians. Nobody gave the Syrian representative a mandate to represent the Palestinians here, especially given his country's record of massacres in this regard, which I would rather not mention in this forum.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.39

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-fifth session

39th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 25 October 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 29

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/98)

Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): I am truly honoured to have the opportunity today to address the General Assembly in my capacity as current Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, which gives an impressive account of the broad scope of the cooperation between the two organizations.

The United Nations is one of the closest partners of the OSCE in our common efforts for "freedom from fear", to take that very vivid notion from the Millennium report of the Secretary-General. This special partnership is also reflected in the status of the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

One of our objectives during our chairmanship is to further strengthen cooperation with our partner organizations, in particular the United Nations. It goes without saying that no institution or country on its own is able to combat effectively the threats to security and stability in our region, which have become more diverse and complex since the end of the cold war. The OSCE has always seen itself as an integral part of a web of interlocking institutions which deal with security, human rights and economic issues in the OSCE area.

The call for enhanced cooperation and coordination for a pragmatic division of labour which draws on the respective strengths of the various actors might belong to the standard repertoire of multilateral diplomacy. But this does not change its relevance: we must avoid needless competition between institutions and ensure the efficient use of resources. We, the Member States, bear particular responsibility in this respect.

The OSCE has responded to this challenge by developing the Platform for Cooperative Security as a framework for cooperation between the OSCE and its international partners. This was adopted at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul in November 1999 as part of the Charter on European Security. The goal of the Platform is to strengthen the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between those organizations and institutions concerned with the promotion of comprehensive security in the OSCE area.

I would like to share the conclusion of the Secretary-General, as expressed in his report (A/55/98), that the cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations has continued to prosper over recent years. This is particularly true at the level of work in the field, which is playing an ever greater role

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in the work of the OSCE. In Kosovo, where the OSCE acts as one of the distinct pillars of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, I can even see a new quality in the relations between our two organizations. Given the multitude and diversity of tasks and the very difficult environment, this cooperation has so far fared quite well.

This year is a very special one for our organization. We celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. This document not only constituted a breakthrough in East-West relations during the cold war but also initiated the Helsinki process, which still holds very valid lessons for our common efforts for peace and stability. Helsinki aimed at achieving security and stability through cooperation, and took a broad and comprehensive view of security. I see the most lasting legacy, however, in the recognition of the close link between better relations among States and respect for human rights within them.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) underwent a fundamental change and evolved into the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The key role of democracy and human rights and strong and self-confident civil societies in the efforts of the organization for peace and stability in Europe has, however, remained unchanged. This was confirmed in the Charter on European Security. Participating States are not only responsible to each other for the implementation of OSCE commitments but also accountable to their citizens.

The CSCE, and now the OSCE, has proved to be a very flexible instrument and adjusted itself to far-reaching changes in the security landscape of Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. By evolving into a field organization with a network of 20 missions and other field operations, the OSCE has adapted itself to an environment in which security and stability are more and more threatened by developments within States than by aggressive postures between States. Poverty, ethnic conflict, serious violations of human and minority rights, resource depletion and environmental degradation are often the long-term causes of violent conflict which transcend the scope of the mainly military instruments of classical security policy.

Ultimately, the success of the OSCE will be measured by its contribution to the improvement of the lives of the people in our countries and its response to their needs and hopes and, thus, by its ability to effectively address the various conflicts and crises throughout the OSCE area. Let me therefore turn to the specific challenges for the OSCE in the prevention, settlement and management of conflicts.

There is a continuing focus on South-Eastern Europe. History has very clearly shown that there is no security in Europe as long as there is instability in this part of our continent. The truly historic developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have brought us somewhat closer to a common Europe, wholly at peace and fully free. The Serbian people made it clear that they want to live in a democratic country which is finally at peace with its neighbours.

We all hope that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, under the new democratic leadership, will soon become an integral part of the international community. As Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, I will support the integration of the country into international bodies. I would very much welcome a formal request by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for membership in the OSCE as soon as possible.

The democratic change should help the work of the OSCE in this region, which is mainly devoted to peace-building, and particularly to the fostering of democracy, the rule of law and civil societies. Free and fair elections play a key role in this context. The OSCE is tasked, among others, with the organization of the local elections in Kosovo this Saturday and, two weeks later, of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Kosovo the OSCE has been engaged, together with the United Nations, in the very difficult task of civil and voter registration, which resulted in more than one million registrations and, on the whole, proceeded quite well. I regret very much, however, that the Kosovo Serbs did not participate in this exercise and that the former regime in Belgrade did not allow registration in Serbia. We will certainly not cease our efforts to bring about active participation of the Kosovo Serbs in political life, since otherwise our common goal of maintaining the multi-ethnic character of Kosovo would no longer seem realistic. This will also depend on a significant improvement of the internal security situation. The police school run by the OSCE is contributing to this aim through the

establishment of a professionally trained, multi-ethnic police force.

This year has seen encouraging developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina too, where the OSCE also cooperates closely with the United Nations. The communal elections organized by the OSCE contributed to greater pluralism and less ethnocentrism in the political landscape. I very much hope that the forthcoming general elections will further foster these developments. The growing number of minority returns, which hopefully will be sustained and further speeded up, reflects these positive trends.

One of the main principles of our chairmanship is to give equal attention and treatment to conflicts and potential risks to security, irrespective of their geographical location, and not to lose sight of our pronounced aim to create a common security space. The conflict in the northern Caucasus reminds us that we still have a long way to go in realizing a new era of democracy, peace and unity for all people in the OSCE area. These goals were solemnly proclaimed by heads of State and Government 10 years ago in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. I am convinced that the OSCE can make a very positive contribution to the alleviation of the suffering of the civilian population, as well as to the search for the political dialogue which I see as indispensable for ensuring lasting peace and stability in this region. But this requires the return of the OSCE to the region. We have obtained the principled assurance from the Russian side for such a return. We expect that the specific talks on the technical and organizational details, and in particular on the questions of security, will very soon be concluded successfully.

Of particular concern to our chairmanship are the so-called "frozen conflicts" in the southern Caucasus and in Moldova, conflicts that are often overshadowed by other crises in the OSCE region. Indeed, we can register some progress in the settlement of the conflict concerning the Tshinvali region in South Ossetia, Georgia. The constructive discussion on status-related issues at a meeting with experts from the region in Baden, Austria, last July gave new impetus to the peace negotiations. We are now trying to ensure that this so-called "Baden process" will keep its dynamism.

With regard to Abkhazia, Georgia, our aim remains to help create conditions for the safe and smooth return of refugees to the Gali region, again in close cooperation with the United Nations, which has the leading role in the settlement of this conflict. I believe that a joint evaluation on the ground and on the opening of a United Nations human rights office with OSCE participation in Gali — hopefully under improved security conditions — would be very helpful in this respect.

We hope that the negotiations, which we hope will take place at the end of this month, will lead to progress towards a final settlement of the future status of the Trans-Dniestrian region which respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova. We expect the first steps, with regard to the withdrawal of Russian military equipment, to start very soon, so as to ensure the fulfilment of the respective Istanbul commitment by the Russian Federation.

As to Georgia, let me mention one very successful activity of the OSCE. We often speak — and rightly so — of the promotion of a culture of conflict prevention. A good example for such a preventive approach is, in my view, the observation mission of the OSCE at the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation.

Also in Central Asia, the work of the OSCE is focusing on conflict prevention. During my several visits to the region, the most recent being only last week, and in my talks to the Presidents of the five States, I got a first-hand account of the security problems. Terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime and illegal arms and drug trafficking, resource depletion, especially freshwater scarcities, and environmental problems, but also the precarious situation in Afghanistan, endanger the situation and stability in the whole region.

In view of our target to achieve comprehensive security throughout the OSCE area, we have continued our efforts to increase OSCE cooperation with the Central Asian participating States. The primary role of the OSCE is that of a political platform supporting the efforts of other specialized international actors, including those from the United Nations family. So, for instance, just last week in Tashkent, together with the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, we held an international conference on the issues of drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. I hope that this event was able to raise international awareness of these threats to security and stability, to contribute to the strengthening of regional cooperation among the Central Asian participating

States and to enhance cooperation and coordination among the international actors active in the region.

I have already underlined the key importance of the human dimension in the work of the OSCE. Conflicts in the last decade were mainly internal and took a heavy toll on the civilian population, women and children in particular. We have, therefore, put a specific focus on problems related to human security, such as children in armed conflict, the unchecked proliferation of small arms, and trafficking in human beings, in particular of women and girls. Paying greater attention to these abhorrent facts of civil unrest in the work of the OSCE is the logical consequence of an approach that sees the ultimate aim of all the efforts in the improvement of the security of the individual, an understanding of security which was confirmed in the Istanbul Summit Declaration.

Economic and environmental issues are of considerable relevance in pursuing an effective and broad approach to security policy. We have, therefore, aimed at ensuring a stronger, action-oriented role of the OSCE in this dimension also. The eighth OSCE Economic Forum in Prague in mid-April was indeed devoted to the task of post-conflict rehabilitation. In preparing and organizing the Forum we tried a new and, I think, successful approach, in placing greater emphasis on the OSCE's practical work in the field. We have also pursued the goal of enhanced cooperation between the OSCE and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). To this end the Executive Secretary of the ECE was invited for the first time to address the Permanent Council of the OSCE.

Let me also report on one more measure which should enable the OSCE to respond faster and more efficiently to civilian crises. The Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams — the so-called REACT programme — should allow highly trained civilian experts in the areas of policing, democratization and elections to be deployed to the field more quickly. This would be achieved through greater coherence in the training programmes and recruitment procedures of the participating States. I am very glad that the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Fréchette, has accepted our invitation to attend the forthcoming OSCE Ministerial Council and to speak about the experiences of the United Nations in this field, also in view of the recent Brahimi report.

The Ministerial Council of the OSCE, which will take place at the end of November in Vienna, should provide us with the opportunity both to take stock of the contribution of the Organization to peace and stability in the OSCE area, following the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, and to set guideposts for its future work. We will have to evaluate the progress made since the Istanbul Summit and the contribution of the OSCE to peace-building and conflict prevention. In addition, new threats to security and the responses required of a security organization like the OSCE should be assessed. We would like to see this Ministerial Council give the political impetus to an enhanced focus — also within the framework of the OSCE — to the above-mentioned human security issues.

The OSCE and the United Nations are natural partners in their common efforts for peace, democracy and prosperity. We will continue to further strengthen this close partnership. An effective contribution of the OSCE to security and stability in this region is also in the very interest of the United Nations. This should free up United Nations resources for conflict prevention and crisis management in parts of the world with less developed security arrangements.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Belarus delegation welcomes Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to the General Assembly as we take up the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

The Republic of Belarus attaches special importance to the relationship between the United Nations and the major regional organizations. We are guided by the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations as we approach today's discussion. In our view, the OSCE remains a unique, pan-European forum that reflects the interests and aspirations of all States on the continent.

The activities of the OSCE last year were determined to a large extent by decisions taken at the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in November 1999 and by the major documents adopted there. For all practical purposes, these documents define the principles of the indivisibility of European security and its integration into a global security system. In our view, an analysis of the provisions of the Charter on European Security that was adopted last year in Istanbul and of the

Millennium Declaration further confirms that there is a single framework for relations between the OSCE and the United Nations.

One important activity of the two organizations continues to be the elaboration and implementation of an early warning mechanism to avert and settle conflicts. The OSCE activities in Kosovo that are being carried out within the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) remain a real test for the OSCE and its member States. We believe that, at the present stage — taking account of the democratic changes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — it is once again necessary to seriously assess the consequences of any actions relating to the holding of municipal elections in Kosovo. In our view, we must not rush or take hasty decisions that, given the present security situation in Kosovo, could permanently undermine belief in the ability of the OSCE and of the international community as a whole to act in keeping with generally accepted democratic principles and values. A decision on the holding of elections must be taken on the basis of intensive consultations with Belgrade and take into account the views of all the parties that have an interest in the future status of Kosovo.

This year Belarus and the OSCE worked together particularly on the preparation for and holding of parliamentary elections for the representatives to our country's National Assembly. Throughout virtually all of last year the central electoral commission of the Republic of Belarus, the National Assembly and all the social and political forces in our country were actively involved in discussions with the OSCE consultative observer mission in Minsk. The result of this work was the preparation of a document unprecedented in the 10 years of Belarusian democracy and statehood: the electoral code of the Republic of Belarus. This code took account of virtually all of the key demands of experts from the main international and regional organizations, including the OSCE. In particular, provisions were introduced governing early access of candidates to the media, the status of international electoral observers, limiting the duration of advance voting, abolishing the prosecution of persons who call for the boycott of elections and a number of other important changes. The Council of Europe's Venice Commission for Democracy through Law gave a positive assessment of the document that was adopted.

Just before the elections it was agreed to have the elections evaluated and observed by the OSCE's technical assessment mission, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and representatives from the European Parliament troika. Unfortunately, despite the constructive attitude leading up to the elections, these experts and representatives issued a number of negative assessments regarding the elections themselves. These conclusions were based above all on the views of the ODIHR and did not take into account the conclusions of the many independent international observers, from 28 countries, who had also participated in observing the elections. These conclusions were issued against the backdrop of a United States Department of State announcement — issued well before the holding of the elections — that it was not going to recognize the results.

In our opinion, this was virtually tantamount to ignoring the democratic will of millions of Belarusians as clearly expressed during the fair and free elections. However, in accordance with our electoral code, on 29 October the second round of elections will take place. We have had a positive experience working extensively with the OSCE consultative observer mission in Minsk, and we express the hope that, in the final analysis, at the end of the elections the OSCE will issue an objective assessment of the electoral process in Belarus. Attempts to not recognize the outcome of elections in Belarus and to revive the former Supreme Soviet — which by its own decision ceased functioning on 27 November 1996 — would be simply incomprehensible.

A legitimate and truly active parliament — a national assembly — is needed not only by the people of Belarus, but also by the entire international community, since only a real parliament — and not a shadow of the past — can ratify international agreements and treaties, including those of great importance to the United Nations in the fields of security, disarmament and human rights.

Democracy is still the single main choice for the people of Belarus. Belarus hopes for a very constructive approach in the United Nations and the OSCE to the Belarusian people's implementing their age-old right to exercise democratic choice. It is only in that way that the important principles linking the United Nations and the OSCE, found in the United Nations Charter and the most important documents of the OSCE, can be truly effective.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): My country welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" and is particularly pleased to note that the scope of interrelated activities of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) seems to be ever-broadening. We also welcome that same spirit contained in the statement by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Her Excellency Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

Croatia regards cooperation between the United Nations and regional security organizations as an essential part of the ongoing process to stimulate and consolidate peacekeeping and peace-building initiatives. This could be achieved through assistance in conflict management and the building of post-conflict societies, as well as initiatives toward building democratic processes and sustainable development. In this context, Croatia welcomes the efforts by the OSCE to promote conflict prevention, strengthening of democratic institutions and monitoring of the respect for human and minority rights, in line with the conclusions contained in the Lisbon Summit Declaration and confirmed at the Istanbul Summit.

As an active member of the OSCE, Croatia has contributed and shall continue to contribute to these efforts. My country has closely cooperated with and supported OSCE activities in a variety of fields in Croatia. Croatia appreciates all the work that has been done by the OSCE Mission to Croatia and would like to use this opportunity to thank once again the international police monitors who are performing their duties in the Danubian region alongside Croatian national police officers. They will terminate their activities as a separate body within the OSCE Mission on 31 October 2000, thus proving that the process of reconciliation and the establishment of trust between the two communities in that war-torn part of Croatia is progressing well. We also consider this as another step toward the final conclusion of the OSCE mandate in Croatia.

Croatia supports the ongoing efforts of the OSCE to promote democratic values and to lay down the foundations for self-sustainable societies in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. My delegation welcomes the efforts of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in coordination with the United Nations, aimed at helping to facilitate police and judicial reform, as well as to monitor compliance with media standards, as mandated by the Dayton Accords. In helping to organize elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is very important to keep the balance between the individual rights of citizens on the one hand and the collective rights of the three constituent nations on the other, and in this regard to respect the constitution. We believe that the new political environment in the region will also have a positive influence on the efforts of the OSCE in that country.

We welcome the restructuring of the OSCE Secretariat in order to attain better value from the services that it provides to its participating States and to enhance its response capabilities to emerging crises. In this context, Croatia supports the strengthening of OSCE operational capabilities through the creation of Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams to enable faster deployment of experts for traditional OSCE tasks, such as conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, and also by creating a new operations centre to further improve the effectiveness of the OSCE and facilitate new programmes.

Croatia assigns great importance to the prevention of the recurrence of armed conflicts. This phenomenon remains closely linked both to unresolved issues regarding the cause of conflict, as well as to inadequate or missing programmes for post-conflict peace-building. The commitment of the international community, and here I speak primarily of regional organizations such as the OSCE, must be coordinated and sustained over time, thereby addressing the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, which, if left unattended, can ignite or re-ignite a conflict. The Croatian case may be a good example. The peacekeeping job done by the United Nations, which led to cessation of hostilities and a peace agreement, was taken over by the OSCE. Moreover, another process, the Stability Pact, has been established with the aim of creating long-lasting stability in the region. My country, as an active participant in this process, will continue to support the activities of the Stability Pact.

I would like to use this opportunity to welcome the recent invitations to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, extended by Her Excellency Benita Ferrero-Waldner, acting as the OSCE Chairperson, as well as by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Kofi Annan, to apply for membership to the OSCE and the United Nations respectively.

Membership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in these organizations will benefit the prospects for stability in the region, especially if the OSCE re-establishes its Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Any Yugoslav application should proceed from the internationally accepted position that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is one of five equal successor States to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and should consequently be drafted in a manner consistent with the invitations extended to it.

Before closing, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to Austria, which is currently chairing the OSCE, for all the efforts made and for all the diplomatic skills shown while working to secure the efficient and fruitful functioning of the OSCE. Its performance can be compared to the performance of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra that we admired yesterday.

Mr. Brattskar (Norway): One important aspect of the evolving relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the pattern of cooperation and coordination in the field. Field cooperation has now been established in many of the areas of conflict and instability in the OSCE region, including the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Generally speaking, cooperation in the field functions well.

Recently we have seen greatly increased practical cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo. Within the framework of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE has responsibility for institution building and democratization, fields that are within the core activities of the OSCE. Such a division of labour, based on the comparative advantages of each organization, ensures that the limited resources are used in the most cost-effective way. The development of a police force in Kosovo, in which the United Nations is running the operational part and the OSCE the educational part, as well as the United Nations-OSCE cooperation on the upcoming OSCE-led municipal elections in Kosovo, are concrete examples of this.

Similar cooperative arrangements based on division of responsibility have been established both in Bosnia and Croatia and in several parts of the former Soviet Union, particularly the Transcaucasus, where the United Nations and the OSCE alternately play the leading and supporting roles. This is particularly evident in Georgia, where the division of labour is geographical. In the Abkhazia region of Georgia the United Nations is playing the leading role in the efforts to resolve the conflict, with the OSCE in a supporting role. In South Ossetia the OSCE has taken the lead in efforts to resolve the conflict, while the United Nations Development Programme implements programmes that benefit both communities and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees facilitates the return of refugees and displaced persons. The activities of these two agencies contribute directly to building confidence and promoting development as building blocks in a permanent solution to the conflicts.

In Central Asia, too, there is considerable potential for developing the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE. In recent years, the OSCE has strengthened its presence in the region considerably, and today there are OSCE offices in all five Republics. A number of United Nations agencies also have well-established programmes in these countries. We should therefore look for ways of enhancing cooperation, identifying areas where synergy can be achieved and maximizing the total impact of the efforts of the international community.

As the effectiveness of the OSCE increases, the United Nations will be able to leave more of the responsibility for European crisis management to the OSCE as its regional partner. This of course does not mean that the United Nations will, or should, renounce its overall responsibility to represent, speak for and act on behalf of the international community. The United Nations will still be the Organization that authorizes and legitimizes action by the OSCE. There will still be situations that can be dealt with only by resorting to the United Nations and the Security Council. But within the framework of the close cooperation and contact I have just outlined, the OSCE will increasingly be in a position to make important contributions to security and stability. It will be able to act on behalf of, or in support of, the United Nations, but also on its own, thus enabling the United Nations to concentrate more of its attention and limited resources on conflict management in other parts of the world where regional frameworks are not as well developed as in Europe.

Today, the OSCE has taken on a pronounced operational character. It has permanent field presences

in the 20 countries and conflict areas, in the Balkans, the Caucasus and other parts of the former Soviet Union, including Central Asia. Their tasks fall under the general headings of conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation. In fact, the OSCE is now present in some capacity in every actual or potential trouble spot on the European continent. That makes it unique among European security institutions, and adds a special legitimacy to its efforts.

Let me also touch briefly on the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a result of the momentous developments in Serbia following the elections on 24 September, the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the United Nations and the OSCE is no longer a remote vision. We believe that it is important that there be close contact between the United Nations and the OSCE on this issue. The Austrian Chairperson-in-Office has invited President Kostunica to be represented at the upcoming OSCE Ministerial meeting in late November and, as we have heard today, made it clear that she is ready to receive a formal application for OSCE participation from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In conclusion, we believe that the OSCE will continue to be an essential partner of the United Nations in the years to come: a partner that is prepared to work hand in hand with the United Nations in laying the foundation for economic and social development and easing the burden of the world Organization in conflict prevention and conflict management in the OSCE area.

Mr. Levitte (France) *(spoke in French)*: It is my honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe — the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia — as well as Malta, also an associated country, align themselves with this statement.

One year after the Summit in Istanbul, the ministerial meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which will be held on 27 and 28 November in Vienna, will provide an opportunity to draw up a balance sheet of the implementation of the principles enshrined in the Charter on European Security, as well as of the implementation of the commitments undertaken for the operational strengthening of the OSCE and for the settlement of existing conflicts.

In this connection, regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, the European Union wishes to draw attention to the Platform for Cooperative Security, which is annexed to the Charter on European Security. This Platform is aimed at promoting the mutual strengthening of the organizations and institutions charged with promoting overall security in the OSCE's area of competence. It also provides for the modalities of practical and effective cooperation. The OSCE works for conflict prevention, early warning, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

As the conflicts in the Balkans during the last decade demonstrated, the strengthening of security and stability requires the adoption of measures in all three dimensions of the OSCE's activities corresponding to the three Helsinki baskets in the time of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE): democracy and human rights, economic development and security issues.

The European Union, which contributes 67 per cent of the OSCE budget, believes that that organization, the only one that covers all the aspects of overall security covering the entire European continent, is, of course, called upon to play an essential role.

The European Union hopes that the ministerial meeting will make it possible to take note of the progress towards strengthening the operational capacities of the organization, made necessary by an increase in the organization's field missions and by the diversified tasks entrusted to it.

The European Union has contributed actively to the negotiations that are under way in connection with the OSCE document on small arms and light weapons. The European Union believes that the adoption of such a document at the next ministerial meeting of the OSCE, will also contribute substantially to the preparation of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In order to be able, effectively and rapidly, to deploy experts to a region in crisis in implementation of a mandate given to it directly or delegated to it by another organization, particularly the United Nations, the OSCE has, within the framework of the Rapid

Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams (REACT) mechanism, has endeavoured to make the procedure for recruitment and assignment of personnel to its field missions more rational and more transparent. The European Union is participating actively in the work under way and will seek to ensure that it conforms with the work that it has itself done to establish non-military means to respond to crises.

The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Louise Fréchette, and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, Mr. Javier Solana, were invited to participate in the OSCE ministerial meeting in order to discuss the possibility of cooperation in the field of crisis management.

The operation centre created within the OSCE secretariat should facilitate the preparation and deployment of new missions. The member countries of the Union have made available experts for high-level posts in that centre. The European Union hopes that close ties of cooperation will be established with the body that has a similar field of competence within the United Nations Secretariat. The European Union is participating actively in the consideration now under way of how to provide the OSCE with legal capacity, which, without calling into question the Organization's flexibility, is vital to the improvement of its daily operations and its relationships with the personnel it employs, as well as with the authorities of the countries that receive missions.

The Union is delighted at the new prospects for the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the OSCE following the democratic changes that have taken place in Belgrade and the generally positive attitude towards the OSCE expressed by the new Yugoslav President. The Union hopes it will be possible for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to be welcomed into the OSCE as soon as possible, following the steps and the procedures now under way.

With regard to Kosovo, the European Union, which provides important support for the work of the OSCE mission, is delighted at the intensive and fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in Kosovo. It wishes to pay tribute to the work accomplished by the OSCE in connection with the municipal elections of 28 October, including the physical preparation of the elections, rapid and proper registration of the population and the political parties, the establishment of guidelines and electoral lists, as well as campaign support, media monitoring and advice to political parties. The European Union recalls that a large number of actions of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo are the result of close cooperation between pillars two and three, which relate respectively to the United Nations and the OSCE in the field.

The Union welcomes the success in Croatia of the work of the police-monitoring group in Eastern Slavonia and the region of the Danube, which has led to the recent decision to reduce and restructure that specific area of activity, which the OSCE mission in Croatia had taken over from the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. This illustrates how the work of the United Nations and the OSCE can follow each other and be coordinated in a context of post-conflict normalization. The important progress made by Croatia with respect to its commitments have contributed to this success, and we have all just heard the message addressed to us by the Ambassador of Croatia in this regard.

The European Union continues to appreciate the excellent cooperation of the OSCE and the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It firmly appeals for the adoption by the Parliament and the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the permanent electoral law, as soon as possible following the elections of 11 November, which should be the last one held under the OSCE provisional rules. The Union believes that as the progressive transfer of electoral competence to the Bosnian authorities is accomplished, the Mission should further concentrate on tasks related to democratization, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, transferring the electoral segment to the responsibility of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, as is the rule.

The Union recalls the support it also gives to the OSCE presence in Albania through the Group of Friends, over which it co-presides, and to the OSCE mission in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. With regard to Albania, the European Union also welcomes the support provided by the OSCE in the field of electoral procedures. During the last elections in Albania, that OSCE contribution proved extremely useful. We expect that efforts in that direction will continue with a view to improving electoral procedures and structures.

The Union hopes that the conditions required for the immediate return to Chechnya of the OSCE Assistance Group will now be met, so that it can act to implement the mandate defined in 1995, whose validity was reaffirmed at the Istanbul Summit. Discussions on the technical and organizational details, and in particular on questions of security, should be completed as soon as possible. The Union gives its support to the efforts made by the OSCE Minsk Group and its co-chairpersons in order to facilitate the search for a negotiated solution to the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh. It calls on all the parties involved to display a spirit of compromise, and considers the will expressed by the heads of State of Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue the direct dialogue they have begun an encouraging sign, and it hopes that a formula acceptable to all will promptly be found. The European Union, in cooperation with the institutions of the United Nations system and other international organizations, is determined to make its contribution to support a settlement agreement.

The Union believes that Russia must respect the commitment it undertook at the Istanbul Summit to complete by the end of 2002 the elimination of arms and munitions stockpiles still stationed in the Moldovan region of Transdnestr. It noted the proposals made by Mr. Primakov at the time, who expressed on behalf of the Russian Federation, a will to be further involved in the search for a settlement. The Union will support the efforts of the OSCE acting president to arrive at a political settlement on the future status of that region.

The European Union is delighted at the progress noted during the meeting of experts devoted to South Ossetia in Georgia, held under the auspices of the OSCE last July near Vienna. It hopes that the possible basis for settlement identified at that time will be endorsed at the political level. The Union is prepared to provide financial assistance for the implementation of an agreement and has already designed a plan of assistance for the elimination of small arms.

The deteriorated human rights situation in Abkhazia in Georgia continues to be a concern. The cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations ensures the proper functioning of the joint human rights office opened in Sukhumi. The Union hopes that the two organizations will join their efforts in order to gather information on alleged violations of human rights in the district of Gali and to examine the possibility of opening an office in Gali.

Finally, the Union believes there is a need to respond to the concerns expressed by the authorities of the Central Asia States, given the mounting threats posed by drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. In this context, the Union is pleased at the joint initiative of the acting presidency of the OSCE and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to hold an international conference on this subject on 19 and 20 October in Tashkent. However, it is appropriate to choose a careful approach to these three phenomena, which while somewhat interrelated are nevertheless different in nature and therefore deserve different treatment. For its part, the European Union has taken the initiative to develop a plan to combat drug trafficking. In general terms the European Union welcomes the OSCE efforts to improve cooperation among the international organizations that are present in Central Asia.

I apologize for having spoken at such length and in such detail. The States of the European Union wanted to emphasize at this debate the close cooperation that has developed between the United Nations, the OSCE — the sole organization to cover the entire European continent — and the European Union with its 15 member States. This tripartite cooperation is an excellent example of what the United Nations can accomplish with the full cooperation of regional organizations.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Only six weeks ago, during the Millennium Summits of the General Assembly and the Security Council, two important documents were adopted at the United Nations, namely, the Millennium Declaration and resolution 1318 (2000) — both of which contain provisions calling for the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The issue of further developing cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) thereby assumes additional importance as one of the priority tasks of the coming century.

Over the past 25 years of its activities, the OSCE has accumulated considerable experience in maintaining security and stability in Europe. At present, this unique trans-Atlantic, pan-European and

Euro-Asian organization has been transformed into a major partner of the United Nations. It is rightfully considered a key political factor in efforts to achieve collective security across the area of its responsibility, in particular, in the fields of conflict prevention, crisis management, arms control and disarmament, and post-conflict rehabilitation.

As a member of both the United Nations and the OSCE, Ukraine notes with satisfaction the growing, mutually reinforcing interaction between the two organizations. In our view, the OSCE Istanbul Summit, which was held in November 1999, provided a qualitatively new foundation for this cooperation. In fact, the documents adopted at Istanbul substantially enhanced the OSCE's conceptual basis and operational capabilities by defining a number of agreed steps to be taken by its participating States with a view to ensuring freedom, prosperity and security. Of particular importance was the adoption of the Charter for European Security and, within its framework, the Platform for Cooperative Security, which should serve as a good basis for closer partnership between the OSCE and other international organizations, in particular, the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's report submitted in document A/55/98 provides many good examples of such cooperation. Ukraine welcomes the many meetings that have taken place between officials of the United Nations and the OSCE, as well as the ninth high-level meeting of the United Nations-OSCE-Council of Europe tripartite process of informal consultations, which for the first time was attended by a representative of the European Commission. We support the practice of expanding the format of consultative machinery between the United Nations and the OSCE and other international bodies.

It is also our belief that cooperation between the two organizations can be strengthened through joint endeavours to develop a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention on the basis of widespread use of preventive diplomacy and peace-building on a European and global scale. The implementation of this idea would be largely in consonance with the proposal put forward by President Kuchma of Ukraine at the Millennium Summit and at the Security Council Summit to develop a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention. Ukraine is of the view that a practical step towards developing such a strategy on conflict prevention would be to create regional centres on conflict prevention. In this context, let me recall Ukraine's recent proposal to establish a regional centre for ethnic studies at Kyiv under the auspices of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. We think the activities of such institutions devoted to the monitoring of the current state and development of inter-ethnic relations in the OSCE region would also contribute to the implementation of the United Nations preventive strategy in cooperation with the OSCE.

My country is fully aware of the established division of labour between the United Nations and the OSCE with regard to the settlement of conflict in the OSCE area. We recognize that this division of leading roles in peacemaking efforts is based on the comparative advantages of the two organizations in view of their existing constraints. At the same time, we share the view that all further steps aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two organizations and their missions in zones of conflict should seek to make better use of the resources of the international community in the interests of the countries being assisted.

My country is seriously concerned about the current state of peace settlement for many of the conflicts in the OSCE region. First of all, I would like to refer to the situation in Kosovo. While recognizing the undeniable achievements of the OSCE as one of the pillars of institution-building of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), we are convinced that much more has to be done to make the peace process in the province irreversible and to bring long-awaited stability to the entire Balkans. We hope that the new political environment created by the recent presidential elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will be fully conducive to that end.

We are also convinced that the OSCE — with possible assistance from the United Nations — should take a more active stance to bring about final resolution of so-called frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet territory — in particular in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, and in the Trans-Dniester region of Moldova. Ukraine, as a contributor of personnel to the OSCE missions in Kosovo, Georgia and Nagorny Karabakh, and as one of the guarantor States in the settlement of the conflict in Transdniestria, stands ready to contribute further to the achievement of these goals.

Ukraine is grateful for the ongoing assistance rendered to us jointly by the United Nations Development Programme, OSCE, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities through their inter-agency support for the resettlement and integration of formerly deported people returning to Crimea.

It is well known that Ukraine, with a multi-ethnic population of over 130 ethnic groups, is among the very few newly independent States that have managed to avoid inter-ethnic conflict and to preserve peace and security on its territory. The Ukrainian legislation on national minority rights has received high praise from the Council of Europe, which recognized its full compliance with OSCE norms and principles. Ukraine is the only country in the region in which the OSCE mission to the autonomous Republic of Crimea successfully fulfilled its mandate, in 1999, concluding that the problems of national minorities had been solved by the Government of Ukraine and that the situation in the peninsula was no longer a cause for concern.

Mindful of all this, the President of Ukraine recently decided to submit the candidature of the former Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Mr. Tarasyuk, to the post of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. The elections are to take place at the next OSCE ministerial meeting, which is to be held in Vienna at the end of November 2000. We hope that his candidature will enjoy overwhelming support.

Finally, we believe that the draft resolution to be adopted at a later stage during the current session of the General Assembly will contribute to further strengthening the mutually complementary cooperation that exists between the United Nations and the OSCE.

In conclusion, I would like to express our admiration for Austria's performance of its duties as OSCE Chairman-in-Office. We congratulate Minister Ferrero-Waldner on her outstanding personal commitment to that task. We also wish the same success to Romania, which is to take up those responsibilities next year.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation deems it essential to further improve and intensify United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We have consistently advocated the institutionalization of forms of interaction and cooperation as well as the more effective use of the capacities and resources of regional organizations. Of course, this should be done while preserving the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We welcome the further development of the practice of regular meetings between top officials of the United Nations Secretariat and leading regional organizations. We must increase the practical returns from these events. This applies, of course, to cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The OSCE has unique experience in disarmament and arms control, the implementation of confidence-building measures and the promotion of democratization in the Euro-Atlantic area. We believe that it should play a central system-building and coordinating role in European matters, not only in preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and crisis settlement, but also in other areas where the OSCE's key advantages — a comprehensive approach to security problems and the wide span of its geographic coverage — can be used. In addition, the OSCE's functions in the area of legal norm-making must be maintained and strengthened. The OSCE should also define the principles and realities of inter-State and inter-institutional relations. Indeed, it should be a kind of trendsetter in this area.

The full use of the OSCE's unique potential will make it possible to create a system of equal security in the Euro-Atlantic area that is based on maintaining the balance of interests of all countries in the region. The organization must not be allowed to become an instrument for furthering the narrow interests or expanding the sphere of influence of certain States, groups of States or military-political alliances. Such a trend, if not neutralized, will inevitably result in the OSCE's dying out.

We attach great importance to the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OSCE member States, to be held in Vienna from 27 to 28 November. The Russian delegation has introduced a number of important proposals for that meeting, including an OSCE declaration on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary. We believe

that document could address the important issue of cooperation to effectively counter emerging risks and challenges, in particular the revival of fascism and international terrorism.

We believe that in view of its experience and sphere of competence, the OSCE should also play an active role in the implementation of the Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe, including the overall monitoring of that initiative. Progress on the implementation of the Pact should be assessed at the meeting of the OSCE Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs next month.

United Nations-OSCE cooperation is becoming an important factor in strengthening global and regional stability. Such cooperation should be further focused on areas of key significance for the international community. These include helping to prevent and settle conflicts; ensuring the humanitarian aspects of security, including respect for human rights and the rights of national minorities; and building democratic institutions.

We believe also that the OSCE should concentrate on specific objectives, without substituting for the United Nations in those areas where the latter, because of its universality, can effectively coordinate the actions of various organizations and institutions.

In this context, we attach great significance to the interaction between the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and their corresponding partners within the United Nations system, primarily those operating in Geneva.

Russia welcomes and supports the further strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the Balkans, in the process of conflict settlement in Abkhazia, Georgia, and Nagorny Karabakh, and in post-conflict peace-building in Tajikistan. Cooperation between the two organizations in resolving the problem of victims of forced migration within the territory of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States countries is very promising.

We welcome also the mutually complementary efforts of the Economic Commission for Europe and the OSCE secretariat Coordinator on Economic and Environmental Issues.

Turning to the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, which the Assembly will be considering later, let me emphasize that we deem it essential that the draft be adopted by consensus. To that end, purely regional issues unrelated to the item should not be artificially introduced into the text. The draft should focus on the framework policy for cooperation between the two organizations.

We expect that the adoption of this draft resolution, which Russia has traditionally co-sponsored, will provide important additional impetus for increasing the practical returns from the interaction between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Mr. Dacaru (Romania): I should like to start by expressing Romania's full support for the statement just made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union and associated countries.

Allow me, as the representative of the next Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to add some specific comments. I am deeply honoured to address the Assembly on this important agenda item on the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Our OSCE chairmanship in 2001 is one of our major foreign-policy priorities and will be guided by the following main principles and objectives: increasing the OSCE's contribution to a free, democratic, prosperous and undivided Europe; fostering the OSCE's role as a forum for political dialogue and cooperation in the field of comprehensive security; identifying the means by which the political will of the OSCE States could be commensurate with the possibilities and operational capabilities of the organization; increasing the efficiency of the OSCE's activities, operations, institutions and mechanisms; respecting the OSCE's achievements and working to ensure compliance by all participating States with its principles, standards, norms and values; maintaining the dynamic and flexible character of the OSCE structures, which should be open and able to adapt quickly to the new priorities and challenges; and fostering the OSCE's cooperation with other institutions and organizations.

Our ultimate goal will be to contribute to the improvement of the political, economic and environmental security of the citizens of OSCE member States, based on respect for human rights, in order to achieve prosperity and social justice. We will

do our utmost to ensure that the OSCE makes its contribution in this respect.

Based on these general objectives, Romania has already identified some concrete priorities. Allow me to comment on a few of them.

In the field of conflict prevention and crisis management, one of our priorities will remain, of course, the situation in the Balkans. In our view, the recent political changes in Belgrade have created an important opportunity for long-term stabilization in the area. We will focus strongly on post-conflict rehabilitation and assistance in the setting up of democratic institutions and the strengthening of the rule of law in the region. Preventive diplomacy is also very important in the region, and increasing intraregional cooperation is a must. This should be complemented by the implementation of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

In addition to the Balkans, the Caucasus will be a focal point of our activities during our chairmanship of the OSCE, with special focus on the situation in Chechnya and Nagorny Karabakh. The implementation of the Istanbul Summit decisions concerning the withdrawal of foreign troops from Georgia and the Republic of Moldova are issues to which we also attach high importance.

We shall also focus on developments in Central Asia, with a view to strengthening the OSCE involvement in the region. Given a background of huge disparities — political, social and economic — between the five States and great ethnic diversity in the region, the risk of extreme instability is still high and the situation will require adequate attention from the organization. Other tasks of the organization under the Romanian chairmanship will include participation in preparing for and observing elections in a number of OSCE member States. In this context, we will put special emphasis on strengthening the OSCE's resources and operational capabilities as a field organization, especially through the implementation of the high-level commitments and decisions related to this issue.

With respect to the human dimension, the Romanian chairmanship will contribute to addressing such issues as the prevention of the torture of children in armed conflict, the situation of internally displaced persons and the problem of trafficking in human beings. Last, but not least, we will continue to pay attention to non-conventional challenges to European security. That is why Romania has proposed that the 2001 OCSE Economic Forum should concentrate on the issue of transparency and good governance in economic matters.

The multifaceted and complex nature of security in the OSCE region in recent years has underlined the fact that no organization acting alone is able to cope with the current challenges. To implement the priorities that I have underlined, therefore, we shall attempt to improve cooperation between the OSCE and other institutions and organizations, especially the United Nations, and render it operational. The recent report of the Secretary-General in document A/55/98, for which we extend our warm congratulations, fully demonstrates that cooperation between the two organizations has, indeed, intensified over the past year. Romania will make every effort to further enhance the relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. During the next year, we will continue to maintain close coordination through regular contacts at all levels.

Before concluding, I should like to commend the excellent work done by the Austrian Chairperson-in-Office, Her Excellency Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and assure the Secretary General of the OSCE, Mr. Ján Kubiš, of our full support.

Mr. Kobayashi (Japan): Since the end of the cold war, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been contributing to stability and peace in Europe and central Asia through a broad range of activities in the political, economic, social and humanitarian fields. It has carried out many of its activities in close cooperation with various bodies within the United Nations system. I am pleased to have this opportunity to describe briefly the ways in which Japan, as a partner for cooperation, participates in and contributes to the activities of the OSCE, particularly its operations in South-Eastern Europe.

Since 1996, Japan has sent over 100 election observers to Bosnia and Herzegovina to help supervise the elections there, and has contributed a total of $4.5 million to that effort. Japan has also provided personnel to, for example, the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje and the OSCE mission to Croatia. Furthermore, Japan has participated in the OSCE mission in Kosovo with the contribution of more than

$1 million of emergency assistance. Most recently, it has dispatched two experts on the Balkans region to contribute to OSCE efforts to ensure that the local elections to be held there are conducted in a free and fair manner. In support of the reconstruction and democratization process, Japan has also decided to assist media activities in Kosovo, contributing $14.5 million for media equipment through the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). This media-assistance project is currently being implemented in cooperation with the OSCE.

In the belief that cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE can contribute greatly, not only to the stability of the region, but also to international peace and security, Japan considers that it is very important to further strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming Japan's ongoing commitment to the activities of the OSCE.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I should like first of all to take this opportunity to welcome Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, in her capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The dramatic changes that the world has gone through during recent decades have created new opportunities for cooperation among nations, while posing new threats. This dichotomy makes cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations more urgent, if we are to both seize the emerging opportunities and meet the challenges facing the world community.

Ten years ago, when the communist system collapsed, many small and medium-sized countries, such as Armenia, could have been left in a political and security vacuum. The OSCE had the vision and the leadership to include those countries in its structure, and thus provided small countries like Armenia with the opportunity to anchor themselves in the community of European nations in accordance with long-established political and social values. While we hope that this integration process will be an ongoing, comprehensive one, we approach our engagement as both a challenge and an opportunity.

History has offered us an opportunity to create a new foundation for our common destiny in the OSCE area. The guiding principles and commitments for this common future were laid down in the Helsinki Final Act. We believe that adherence to the principles of democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and OSCE documents, will create a new space free of dividing lines. In this regard, we consider the Charter on European Security, adopted at the 1999 Summit of the OSCE, as a cornerstone of future European security.

We support the enhancement of the role of the OSCE as a major forum addressing the challenges in the region through preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. Strengthening the role of the OSCE will enable it to better assume its responsibilities as a regional organization in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

Today, as some long-suppressed conflicts surface, we notice with satisfaction that the OSCE is willing to rise to the challenge and explore new territory. In its pursuit of solutions and its management of crises, the OSCE, a complex multinational organization, often needs to reconcile principles and norms that, prima facie, may not always appear to be compatible.

In his report contained in document A/55/98, the Secretary-General states that the United Nations and the OSCE continued to practise a division of labour based on the comparative advantages of the two organizations and notes, inter alia, that the OSCE has retained the lead in the resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. This approach is very much in line with our view that the present format of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship is most appropriate for the resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, especially given the fact that the OSCE is the sole mandated and authoritative body dealing with the issue.

Since 1992 the OSCE has been actively involved through the various permutations of the Minsk process to define the elements for durable peace and stability. Being advocates of a more flexible approach to the settlement, the Government of Armenia, as well as the authorities of Nagorny Karabakh, have accepted the recent proposals of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk

Group as a more realistic effort to address the issue of the status of Nagorny Karabakh, with minimal prejudice to either of the competing claims. Regrettably, Azerbaijan has rejected those proposals. Nevertheless, we hope that the intensified dialogue between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan will enhance the peace process and help to bring about a lasting and comprehensive solution to the problem, through the resumption of negotiations within the OSCE Minsk Group, as stated in the Declaration of the OSCE Summit held in Istanbul, although we think that direct negotiations between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh would be more productive.

The contemporary history of conflict resolution reflects the changing nature of inter- and intra-State relations. It clearly shows the necessity of breaking through the frameworks of conventional perceptions of sovereignty. In this context, we are confident that the Nagorny Karabakh conflict can be resolved only on the basis of the legal equality of the parties to the conflict.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia stated during the general debate,

> "For us, peace in Nagorny Karabakh represents, of course, the promise of transforming a situation of hostility and confrontation with our neighbour, Azerbaijan, into one of cooperation and mutually reinforced security. We would like to think of the day when Karabakh is transformed from being a chasm separating our countries into a bridge built for the benefit of all the populations concerned". (*A/55/PV.21, p.12*)

Armenia is fully committed to the guiding principles of the OSCE. We always support and actively participate in all bilateral or regional initiatives aimed at developing relations of good-neighbourliness and cooperation in our region. We reiterate our commitment to the arms control process as one of the main security issues in the OSCE region. We believe that further strengthening of stability through conventional arms control will be decisive for future European security.

To conclude, allow me to express our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Austria and his delegation for the excellent work done during their term as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. We look forward to working closely with the delegation of Romania, the incoming Chairman-in-Office.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate. The draft resolution on this item will be submitted at a later date.

Agenda item 22

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/221)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.12)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. Gomaa (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: It is my pleasure to introduce the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), since my country assumes the chairmanship of the Committee this year.

Over the past 45 years the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee has earned a unique status because of its promotion of legal cooperation between Asian and African States in the field of international law, which is of great importance to our countries. The Committee's initiatives have been welcomed in various United Nations conferences, particularly in conferences dealing with treaty law and the law of the sea. It has also greatly contributed to the establishment of an accepted international legal order based on equality and fairness to all States.

The annual conferences of the Consultative Committee are considered important events in the field of international law. My country, Egypt, had the honour of hosting the session of the Committee in Cairo in February this year, at which a large number of Ministers and high officials from member States, as well as different observer delegations and representatives of international organizations, took part in valuable deliberations and exchanged views concerning contemporary issues in international law, including the topics under examination in the International Law Commission (ILC) and matters pertaining to the implementation of a world trade order.

The Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee expressed the Committee's viewpoints in the United Nations, where the Committee has observer status and to which it

contributes, as well as to the International Law Commission, which the Secretary-General attends regularly. In addition to the annual meetings, several discussions take place during special sessions held by the Committee. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, for instance, organized special meetings in the margins of the annual sessions to discuss the establishment of the International Criminal Court and the law on reservations to treaties, on the treatment of refugees, on the transboundary exercise of jurisdiction by States, as well as proposed meetings concerning the world trade order and review of the special procedures for the settlement of conflicts. These are but recent examples of the work of the Committee.

The reports of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and declarations adopted by the Committee as a result of those special sessions have become an important source for the development of international law, as well as being a reflection of the views and interests of the Asian and African States. It is worth mentioning in particular that the Committee has also devoted itself to defining the common interests of African and Asian States as regards contemporary issues before the United Nations and other international organizations. In this way the Committee is contributing to the development of a fair, sound and just international legal order.

It is a source of pride to us all that the Committee is one of the international organizations working with a very limited budget; its annual budget is one of the smallest provided to international governmental organizations. The Committee has 45 member States, and there are plans to increase this number by the addition of French-speaking States on both continents, as well as of States from Central Asia and Southern Africa.

I encourage the Committee to increase its activities. It has many progressive plans that would be beneficial to all Member States. In this respect, I would like to mention its training programmes for promoting the teaching of international law and for providing legal expertise in the area of international law. In addition, the Committee provides training on the methodology of teaching international law at various universities in the member States, as well as fellowships for Asian and African students to carry out postgraduate studies in the field of international law. The Committee also supports the publication of books and periodicals devoted to international law that are of particular importance in Asia and Africa.

It is also worth mentioning that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee was established to provide expertise in international law to the Asian and African States and to provide specific assistance and advice when needed on any aspect of international law of interest to the member States. Advice has been given, for example, on the development of an appropriate legal framework or necessary legislation for the implementation of international treaties or model agreements for developing special joint arrangements. In addition, advice of a legal nature has been provided to one or various individual States.

It is well known that such activities cannot be undertaken, nor can they successfully achieve their purposes, without the necessary resources and financing. The payments of arrears on assessed contributions, as well as voluntary contributions, will undoubtedly help carry out such activities.

Another source of pride is that the work of the Committee, despite financial constraints, is very well organized, thanks to a small group of experts in international law, who are guided by a group of international diplomats headed by an outstanding Secretary-General. Moreover, the Committee has an excellent library, but it is imperative to improve its facilities in due time. Then the Committee will be able to function as a documentation centre on international law in the service of Asian and African States.

We are confident that in the coming years the Committee will devote greater attention to many issues and will be successful in explaining and consolidating the common interests of the Asian and African States — even the interests of the international community. The Committee will also undoubtedly enhance its training activities and the spreading of international legal expertise among the Asian and African States, a step that will enhance the role of these States in the establishment of a world legal order that is fair and equitable for all States. We are certain also that cooperation between the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and the United Nations will increase progress towards this lofty goal.

We wish the Committee and all its members every success and hope that the United Nations and its Member States will continue to extend vigorous assistance and support to the Committee.

I call upon the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution, contained in document A/55/L.12, which pertains to the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee. The draft resolution pays tribute to the Committee's contributions and hopes that they will continue. So far it has been sponsored by China, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia and Mongolia.

Mr. Gupta (India): We wish the new Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALC) well, and have confidence that under his leadership the Committee will attain new heights in serving the interests not only of the Asian and African States, but also of the wider membership of the United Nations.

It is with great pleasure that we inform the Assembly that India and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee signed the Headquarters Agreement in April this year. Even though the Committee has been situated in New Delhi since its inception and has enjoyed all the privileges and immunities all along, the conclusion of a Headquarters Agreement, coming after the establishment of the Committee's permanent headquarters in New Delhi, is an important landmark in the relationship between the Committee and India as the host country. The Government of India is making every effort to advance the construction of a suitable headquarters building for the office of the Committee and the residence of the Secretary-General, for which a grant of $1.5 million has been earmarked in its budget.

In this connection, it is appropriate to place on record our sincere and highest appreciation for the work and personality of Mr. Tang Chengyuan, who completed his term of office as Secretary-General of the AALCC in May 2000. His service to the Committee and contribution to the Asian-African legal community during his six-year term was marked by economy, efficiency and political wisdom. We wish him well in all his future endeavours.

The present Secretary-General, Ambassador Wafik Kamil, has an ambitious programme and busy schedule ahead of him. His energy and enthusiasm will see the AALCC successfully through many of the programmes. The agenda set out by the last annual meeting of the Committee, held in Cairo in February 2000, is an impressive one. The new areas are challenging.

The success of the Committee's work over the years is attributable to its basic features. The main objectives and functions of the AALCC are several-fold. The Committee was established essentially to promote international legal cooperation, develop and disseminate expertise in international law by organizing annual meetings, seminars and workshops focusing on current issues of international law under consideration in different forums of the United Nations and other bodies, and to contribute to the process of codification and development of international law. While all endeavours in the field of international law have their political and policy implications, the efforts of the Committee have always been confined to areas of legal interest, while issues of political controversy have been left for other forums within and outside the United Nations.

At the technical level, there are several areas to which the Committee could give priority: the work of the International Law Commission, the contribution being made by the International Court of Justice, evolving international criminal law, legal issues arising from the multitude of international conventions under negotiation, the operation of the international seabed area regime, principles applicable to outer space activities and environmental law.

We are grateful to the AALCC for taking initiatives in organizing special meetings on subjects of contemporary relevance, in cooperation with other international organizations, such as the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization. These meetings have resulted in the publication of some useful materials. In a joint initiative with the United Nations Environment Programme last year, the AALCC brought out a handbook on environmental law that is designed to provide its users with a comprehensive collection of important global and regional environmental law documents. The AALCC publications are useful for budding national and regional capacities to enhance compliance with and implementation of global and regional agreements.

We wish the new Secretary-General all success in his present term of office and assure him of our full cooperation.

Mr. Bossiere (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as Norway, as a country of the European Free Trade Association member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Every two years, the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee provides an opportunity to review cooperation which, from modest beginnings, has intensified and grown to encompass a wide range of subjects. It covers economic, environmental and humanitarian questions, as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We wish to thank the United Nations Secretary-General for his report, which describes the Committee's activities on subjects of interest to both organizations. The report describes the actions taken in this context and testifies to the numerous consultations that have been held between the Committee and various United Nations organs over the two-year period. We therefore wish particularly to emphasize the important role played by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee in the programmes of the United Nations Decade of International Law and in environment and sustainable development programmes, as well as its commitment to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. These fields of activity were mentioned in General Assembly resolution 53/14 of October 1998.

The Committee's initiatives, however, go beyond these issues. For example, it was one of the six regional organizations chosen by the organizers of the centennial celebrations for the first International Peace Conference. We note with satisfaction the attention paid by the Consultative Committee to the work of the International Law Commission, in particular with regard to the settlement of disputes. The Committee's action thereby supports the work of the United Nations and contributes to the progressive codification of international law by encouraging exchanges of views and of information.

Initiatives taken by the Consultative Committee have proven useful to the work of the Sixth Committee. The special interest now taken by the Committee in international trade law and in the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law will doubtless help to assert the universal character of the latter's proceedings. Similarly, attention paid by the Committee to the functioning of the legal and arbitration bodies established by the Convention on the Law of the Sea; to the operation of the bodies of the World Trade Organization; and to the proceedings of the World Intellectual Property Organization will certainly help to enrich their work.

That is why we hope that this cooperation will continue in the interest of the entire United Nations system.

Mr. Qu Wensheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Goma for his introductory statement on the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC). His introduction allowed us to note with pleasure the growing relationship between the two organizations and their ever-widening spheres of cooperation.

The AALCC, as a legal consultative committee of Asian and African Governments, has been dedicated from the day of its inception to legal consultations and coordination among member States. It considers and studies the latest developments in international law. It undertakes in-depth studies of legal issues of interest to Asian and African States and has achieved positive results. Experience has shown that the AALCC has not only provided a forum for discussion and cooperation on legal and related issues of common concern to Asian and African countries, but also made important contributions to the development and codification of international law.

Since attaining observer status in the General Assembly, the AALCC has increased its cooperation with the United Nations. The United Nations Secretary-General, the International Law Commission (ILC), the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees all send representatives to the AALCC's annual sessions. The AALCC in turn attends various meetings of United Nations bodies and actively participates in the deliberation of issues within its competence.

For many years, the AALCC has treated legal and related issues of concern to the United Nations and its bodies as priority items on its agenda. In this regard, the AALCC's cooperation with the ILC stands out. Each year, the AALCC invites an ILC representative to attend its annual sessions and to give a briefing on the Commission's work. It also places consideration of the ILC report on its agenda, debates it and makes recommendations. In turn, the Secretary-General of AALCC attends the ILC's annual sessions and briefs the Commission on its work. The two bodies enjoy very satisfactory and fruitful cooperation.

In addition to international law, the AALCC's cooperation with the United Nations is expanding into other areas, such as economic, social, environmental and humanitarian matters. For example, after the decade of 1990 to 1999 was declared the United Nations Decade of International Law, the AALCC right away compiled research material, decided on activities to be launched during the Decade and submitted a report to the Secretary-General on a possible role of the AALCC in attaining the goals of the Decade.

In April 1999, during its thirty-eighth session, the AALCC held a special meeting on environmental law and published, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, the Asian-African Handbook on Environmental Law.

As a member of the United Nations and the AALCC, China is pleased to see the increasingly close and broad cooperation between the two organizations. We hope that they will strengthen their cooperation in areas of common concern in the new millennium, especially with regard to the development and codification of international law, which would thus provide a good model of how global and regional intergovernmental organizations could closely cooperate for world peace and development.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the AALCC. Since 1983 when it became a full member, China has actively participated in the AALCC's work and vigorously supported it. China is ready to further strengthen the role and impact of the AALCC and make a contribution to the close cooperation between it and the United Nations.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his report on the "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee," as contained in document A/55/221.

I also would like to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Wafik Zaher Kamil, the new Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), for his election to this high office. We are confident that under his stewardship the AALCC will grow further. I also wish to express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Tang Chengyuan, the former Secretary-General of the AALCC for his outstanding service.

The AALCC is a unique organization embodying a large number of Asian and African States that are willing to actively participate in making the law that governs relations among nations and to positively contribute to the promotion of the rule of law in international relations. Since its foundation, the Consultative Committee has undertaken various studies on international legal subjects of common concern to the two continents. It has also facilitated the exchange of views and information among its members States on developments relating to international legal matters and has played a significant role in harmonizing the positions of Asian and African countries on major legal issues.

It needs to be underscored that the Consultative Committee has undertaken a systematic and consistent study of items that are on the agendas of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly and the International Law Commission, from Asian and African perspectives. Commentaries and recommendations of this organization have been, directly or indirectly, reflected in the proceedings of the United Nations legal organs and have assisted its member States to actively participate in international legal conferences.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC on international legal matters began immediately after the coming into existence of the Consultative Committee in 1956 and became institutional in 1980 when observer status was accorded to the AALCC by the United Nations General Assembly. The cooperation that continues to exist today has proved to be fruitful and has served the mutual interests of the two organizations. This collaboration has been developed further in recent years and is being carried out in several forms and

covers various subjects of high importance to the international community as a whole.

I need not dwell on various aspects of this flourishing relationship since the report before the Assembly illustrates in detail the valuable cooperation developed between the two organizations. The areas of cooperation apart from the field of international law now include subjects relating to economic, environmental and humanitarian law and peaceful settlement of disputes. I should like to highlight only a few examples of this constructive cooperation:

During the period under consideration, the Consultative Committee organized several seminars and workshops to promote adherence by its member States to a number of instruments that have been developed under the auspices of different bodies of the United Nations. It has also provided technical assistance to its members who wanted to become parties to these instruments. Beyond any doubt, the promotion and the dissemination of the international instruments at the regional level is an essential factor for better understanding of these documents, which in turn would facilitate their universal acceptance.

The wide range of topics on the agenda of the Consultative Committee is indicative of the resolve of the Committee to positively contribute to the new challenges of the international communities arising out of globalization. The Consultative Committee closely monitors the legal developments relating to international economic cooperation for development. The three seminars organized by the Committee in the past two years are examples of activities carried out by the Committee to meet the challenges of the new era.

Last but not the least, regional arbitration centres that have been established in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, Tehran and Lagos, under the scheme established by the AALCC, represent a noteworthy step taken by the Committee to promote the settlement of commercial disputes at the regional level. This scheme aims at assisting the administration of national and international arbitration cases based on the rules that have been developed by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

To conclude, we feel that prospects for future cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee are promising. This is why the Islamic Republic of Iran has co-sponsored the draft resolution on the cooperation between the two organizations, as contained in document A/55/L.12, and hopes that this resolution would be unanimously approved by this Assembly.

Mr. Anwar (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee," contained in document A/55/221.

More than four decades ago, the Asian and African nations established the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), an outcome of the historic Bandung Conference, to serve as an advisory body to its member States in the field of international law and as a forum for Asian-African cooperation in legal matters of common concern. Since its inception, its endeavours have surpassed our expectations. Apart from undertaking a number of significant studies in international law, it has served member States effectively by providing a forum for the exchange of views and for harmonizing the views and positions of the Asian and African countries on various aspects in the codification and development of international law. All this bodes well for the establishment of a world order based on justice and equity for all nations.

One of the main objectives of the AALCC is to enhance the progressive development of international law while forging close links between itself and the United Nations. This common goal was attained in 1980 when the AALCC was accorded Permanent Observer status, laying the foundations for a flourishing cooperation between the two bodies. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that the Consultative Committee has accorded close attention to the items on the agenda of the Sixth Committee from the perspective of developing countries.

This cooperative framework has achieved considerable success. Close consultation in matters concerning international law has now expanded to the fields of economic, environmental and humanitarian law as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes. During the past two years, the AALCC has participated in a number of important meetings and conferences which have included, among others, sessions of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court, the observation of the centennial of the first International Peace Conference at The Hague, the

United Nations Environment Programme and the International Law Commission. Also, it is most relevant that another item has been placed on its agenda concerning the extraterritorial application of national legislation and sanctions imposed against third parties.

Since the preparation of a study on strengthening the role of the United Nations through the rationalization of its functional modalities with special reference to the General Assembly, in 1985, the AALCC has undertaken a number of initiatives to strengthen the role of the United Nations by promoting its activities among its member States. Similarly, there can be no doubt of its tireless efforts in contributing to the success of the United Nations Decade of International Law.

It is also important to focus attention on the Consultative Committee's endeavours to render assistance to its member States with a view to facilitating their active participation in the meetings of the Sixth Committee. In this regard, it is pertinent to note AALCC's work on the topic of the jurisdictional immunities of States and their properties at its thirty-ninth session. Furthermore, the assistance of the AALCC in ascertaining the feasibility of compiling the national legislation, jurisprudence and practices of member States is a worthy endeavour.

Over the years, my delegation has acknowledged with appreciation the AALCC's close monitoring of the work and functioning of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Seabed Authority, as well as other related organs. As alluded to in the report of the Secretary-General, with the growing number of maritime delimitation cases being brought before the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, the study of the law of the sea should be a priority for the AALCC member States.

As a developing country, Indonesia appreciates the work of the AALCC on economic cooperation for development. My delegation is therefore gratified that the AALCC organized, with financial and technical assistance, a one- day special meeting on "Electronic Commerce: Legal Issues and its Impact on Developing Countries". In my delegation's view this is an item of particular importance in an electronic age of e-commerce, intellectual property and complex issues relating to contractual obligations.

Finally, my delegation deems it a distinct pleasure to join in sponsoring the draft resolution on the item before us and hopes that it will receive the unanimous support of Member States.

The President: In accordance with resolution 35/2 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Mr. Wafik Kamil.

Mr. Kamil (Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee): It is an honour for me to address this meeting of the General Assembly. May I at the outset thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee. I also wish to thank all the delegations who have spoken on the item and who have elaborated on the many topics in which cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC exists.

Destiny has allowed me today, for the first time in my diplomatic career and on the eve of the dawn of the new Millennium, to address the representatives of our planet from the podium of the highest-level Assembly. Allow me to pay homage to the United Nations for its 55 years of immense efforts for the sake of international peace and security, as well as to all the Secretaries-General of the Organization and to all previous Presidents of the General Assembly who guided the international community towards peace, stability, development, peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and basic freedoms and who have tried, by all possible means, to relieve the suffering from hunger, desertification, natural disasters, epidemics and so on of people in all corners of our planet. We also applaud all those who spared no effort, goodwill or vigilance in combating the "human plagues" who perpetrated horrors against their own brothers and sisters.

When we look back at the events of the last century, both pride and shame engulf our thoughts. Tremendous advances were made in the fields of industry, technology, science and medicine. However, there were two world wars and numerous conflicts, killing millions of people. The use of the most destructive weapons of mass destruction — nuclear weapons — causes humanity to shudder even today.

Just a few weeks ago, on the historic occasion of the Millennium Summit, more than 150 heads of State and Government assembled in this very Hall and spoke

from this rostrum. The voices were many, but there was a common message, and that was unity among diversity — unity for the common goal of international peace, security and nuclear disarmament, protection of human rights and freedom, removal of poverty, disease and so on.

The Declaration adopted by the Millennium Assembly reaffirmed faith in the United Nations and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. It recognized that while globalization offers great opportunities, benefits at present are unevenly shared and costs unevenly distributed. This imbalance should be corrected to provide the cornerstone of a just world and of the success of efforts for globalization. The Assembly also resolved to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international affairs and to make the United Nations more effective in maintaining international peace and security. We sincerely hope that the dawn of the new millennium will bring a new awakening and a determination to make the world a safer and saner place for present and future generations.

In order to achieve this objective, the United Nations will and should play the central role. Humanity should spare no effort to keep our United Nations, the heart of our planet, alive, productive and effective. It is heartening to note that in this context the Assembly stressed the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

As a representative of a regional organization who assumed the duties of Secretary-General in May 2000, I would like to assure the Assembly that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) will not fail in its duty. It is committed to the ideals of the United Nations and is ready to share responsibility in promoting the effective implementation of various international conventions in areas such as arms control, disarmament, humanitarian law and human rights, terrorism, drug trafficking, environment and other relevant areas.

In recognition of its role, the accordance of permanent observer status to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1980 was a turning point in the history of the AALCC. It soon oriented its activities to suit the needs and aspirations of its member States.

When I prepared my statement on this item, I studied, as the new Secretary-General of the AALCC, the programme of cooperation in force between the world Organization and the AALCC, which was agreed pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/38 of 18 November 1981. This programme, besides establishing a cooperative framework for mutual consultation and representation, identified areas for focused attention between the two organizations, such as the law of the sea, refugees, strengthening the role of the United Nations, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and international economic cooperation for development. Over the years great efforts have been made by the AALCC to implement programmes in these areas. Time does not permit me to elaborate in detail. The Secretary-General's report and all my colleagues' interventions have covered most of the areas of cooperation. I would only like to point out that the study prepared by the AALCC on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, the AALCC's study promoting the role of the International Court of Justice and the establishment of the AALCC's regional arbitration centres were just a few areas where the AALCC has made useful contributions to supplement the work of the United Nations.

Concerning the existing cooperation between the United Nations and our Committee, I wish to state that the AALCC, since its establishment in 1956, has been a major forum for cooperation among the States of the Asian-African regions on international law matters. Among the numerous subjects considered by the Committee, the law of the sea had and still has a distinctive place. Concepts such as the exclusive economic zone and archipelagic States had their origin in AALCC deliberations. On many other subjects, such as refugee law, human rights, the International Criminal Court, the environment, trade law matters and the United Nations Decade of International Law, the Committee made equally useful contributions.

The preparation of extensive studies to assist its member States in participating in international legal conferences convoked under the auspices of the United Nations and on selected items on the agenda of the annual session of the General Assembly became the regular activities of the AALCC secretariat. In addition, the holding of an annual meeting of legal advisers of AALCC member States in New York and the consideration by the General Assembly of the item on cooperation between the AALCC and the United Nations provided other opportunities to coordinate its activities with the United Nations. Since I have

assumed the duties of Secretary-General, it has been my endeavour to strengthen existing cooperation and find new areas in which the AALCC could supplement the work of the United Nations.

It has been the constant endeavour of the AALCC to promote wider acceptance of United Nations Conventions. It will continue its focus on the core group of 25 multilateral treaties which reflect the key policy goals of the United Nations and the spirit of the Charter, in respect of which the United Nations Secretary-General has made an appeal. It may not be out of place to mention here that apart from the United Nations, the AALCC has concluded cooperation agreements with several United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, such as the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Council of Europe. The thrust of these agreements is to organize joint programmes and meetings on topics of current relevance. Invariably, the focus has been on the promotion of wider acceptance of international conventions, especially those concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and its agencies.

I would like to touch briefly upon some of the pressing issues that need urgent attention and are included in our programme of cooperation. A problem that has assumed new dimensions and has aroused greater concern is international terrorism. Illicit drug trafficking, small-arms smuggling and nuclear terrorism are also complex issues that need urgent attention. The recently concluded Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which I hope will be adopted by the General Assembly this year, together with other international conventions dealing with specific aspects of terrorism, provide useful a legal framework. However, the need for a comprehensive and concerted approach can hardly be overemphasized.

In recent years a great deal of attention has been focused on human rights issues. The implementation of international conventions on these matters has stirred some controversy. The basic concern of developing countries is the recognition of their right to development. Their priorities are the eradication of poverty, creating better health conditions and promoting education and more employment opportunities for millions of their citizens. These perspectives should not be overlooked in determining the norms and legal niceties involved in the implementation of those conventions.

Among the recent initiatives aimed at enhancing the AALCC's role, the Committee has embarked upon new programme areas. In order to highlight the importance of issues related to globalization, it has focused its attention on the work of the World Trade Organization. The legal issues emanating from information technology are being taken up in close cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization. With regard to refugee matters, the AALCC's 1966 Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees have been revised in consultation and cooperation with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). More recently, two weeks ago an agreement was concluded with the International Organization for Migration to give in-depth consideration to migration issues. Closer cooperation with human rights organizations is being established to initiate joint programmes. With a view to strengthening the legal regime of non-proliferation and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Asian and African region, the organization of a training course in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency is being considered.

Such high-sounding words as human dignity, equality and equity do not mean much for millions of hungry and poor people in many parts of the world. The problem of refugees and displaced persons continues to haunt humanity. The protection of civilians in armed conflict and the scourge of leftover landmines in many parts of the world, along with the huge costs of destroying them, are two other issues of great concern.

A closely related aspect that has crippled the economies and growth of many developing countries — especially on the African continent — is the debt burden. I appeal to developed countries from this, the highest forum of mankind, to take a pragmatic view of this problem and find a solution to it. Without a solution, and if developing countries are not relieved of this heavy burden, those countries will have great difficulty in finding their way to development and new technologies to combat hunger, epidemics and similar problems.

In connection with all these problems, I would like to recall the "Declaration on the Enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security", which was adopted

by the General Assembly on 9 December 1994. That Declaration emphasized that regional organizations can usefully complement the work of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in providing confidence-building measures in their specific regions. The AALCC would be pleased to continue and to strengthen its cooperation with regard to all the topics I have mentioned in order to attain international peace and security, strengthen international cooperation and enhance the rule of law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce an oral revision to the draft resolution he introduced earlier in this meeting.

Mr. Gomaa (Egypt): I am taking the floor on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/55/L.12 in order to introduce a correction to it before the General Assembly acts on it.

As the item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee is a biennial one, it should be included on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Therefore, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to paragraph 7, the last paragraph of the draft resolution. The reference in that paragraph to the fifty-sixth session, should in fact read "the fifty-seventh session".

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/55/L.12, Japan and Sri Lanka have become co-sponsors.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.12, as orally revised.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.12, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/55/L.12, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 55/4).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 22?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences (A/55/312/Add.1)

The President: As members are aware, the Assembly, in section I, paragraph 7 of its resolution 40/243, decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in document A/55/312/Add.1, the Committee on Conferences has recommended that the Assembly authorize the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group to meet in New York during the main part of the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly adopts this recommendation of the Committee on Conferences?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 174

The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order

Draft resolution (A/55/L.15)

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): It is my honour to initiate this morning, upon the instructions of my Government, a discussion of agenda item 174, relating to the role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order. As delegations will have gathered from our past statements on this theme, as well as from the information material which we have recently circulated, the concept of such an order was the brainchild of the late Mr. Cheddi Jagan, President of Guyana, who was inspired by a vision of the enormous potential for human development created by the end of the cold war, the accelerated rate of technological development and the developing interdependence of nations. President Jagan believed that it was now opportune for the nations of the world to begin to build a new and enlightened partnership based on mutual respect, democratic governance and popular participation, and embodying — like any other partnership — the rights and obligations of the parties. I may add that this concept has already been endorsed by the heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, by the Commonwealth heads of

Government, by the Rio Group, by the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held at Durban, South Africa, and by the Group of 77 summit held at Havana, Cuba.

And now, committed to the promotion of the late President's vision by the Government, my Government has decided now to bring this proposal to the United Nations so that it might enter the wider consciousness of the international community. In so doing, we have been prompted by the realization that over the past two decades there has been a gradual but definite displacement of development from the international policy agenda. That displacement has occurred primarily in the context of two important and interrelated developments, namely the ideological and political ascendancy of economic neo-liberalism, with its emphasis on the role of the market, and the accelerated pace of globalization, which has itself been increasingly underpinned by a market-liberalizing logic. We are of the view that the time has come for the international community to create an alternative vision for development based on a more balanced relationship between the market and the State.

It may be useful for me first to say a few words on the context and rationale of the proposal for this new order. Why are we taking such an initiative when there may already be others with a similar thrust? And indeed, there has been no dearth of plans to pursue development. Ever since its foundation in 1945, the United Nations has been labouring, decade after decade, to devise an international strategy for development. And, decade after decade, these painfully negotiated agreements have proved resistant to implementation. We may also recall that, at the sixth special session of the General Assembly, we actually managed to forge a Declaration and a Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. And again in 1990, we succeeded in elaborating, after seemingly endless negotiations, the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries.

It is fair to say that those documents fully captured, at least in their language, the aspirations of the developing countries to economic and social progress. Yet, as we know, they have all proved disappointing in their results. Development continues to be a defiant will-o'-the-wisp, forever dancing before our eyes but always elusive.

Undaunted by these failures, we have pursued other initiatives in the hope of better outcomes. Over the decade of the 1990s we entered into a round of global summit conferences on most of the major issues of concern to the international community: children, environment and development, human rights, the sustainable development of small States, population and development, social development, women, human settlements — and the list goes on. We also managed to put together, through sheer perseverance, a comprehensive and cogent Agenda for Development to match the Agenda for Peace. Regrettably, these many efforts failed to yield the desired results, leaving us to wonder whether the game was worth the candle or whether we are engaged in a mere charade. The peoples of the developing countries, I believe, are too tired and too poor to be forever playing games. And yet we are about to embark upon the elaboration of another development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium.

We may very well wonder what can be achieved since the reviews of the outcomes of some of the major conferences which have been held thus far do not augur well for the future. As we ponder the reasons for our shortcomings, we invariably have to lament the chronic lack of the two elements that are required for progress, namely political will and financial resources. We then become caught up in a spiral of mutual reproach and recrimination. No one bothers to pursue the crucial questions: How do we develop the necessary political will, and how can we mobilize the needed resources?

Yet it is not only those shortcomings that raise questions about the international negotiating process. It is also the realization that the new North-South/East-West so-called consensus that has emerged in respect of development and governance, the roles of the State and of the market and sustainable environmentalism has created the need for a new universal human order, because it has generated new social, economic and political problems, perhaps of an unintended character, complexity and magnitude. These are fomented by the contradictions inherent in the consensus itself, and they clearly suggest the need for a fresh examination of the premises on which it is based.

There can therefore be no gainsaying the fact that before we can ever hope to have a breakthrough in development, these core questions of political will and resources must be resolved. The dialectic which currently divides Member States in both the philosophy

and the practice of development can hardly be expected to encourage a common approach to the very difficult challenge that is the development agenda. An urgent reconciliation of the widely divergent views of the partners on world economic and social issues is a prerequisite for success in any future negotiations.

The first step in this process of reconciliation is clearly the resolution of the many dramatic contradictions that have emerged in modern economic thinking. In the socio-economic sphere for example, the ascendancy of economic liberalism has undoubtedly accentuated inequality at all levels: within countries, both developed and developing, as well as among countries — North and South, East and West. Individualism and materialism continue to be extolled at the expense of social and human values. And while the international community says it is committed to the reduction of poverty, national and international policies do not as yet reflect that commitment.

In absolute terms, the population living in poverty in both the South and the North is increasing. Economic growth and unprecedented technological progress and efficiency have been, ironically, the harbingers of greater unemployment and declining human welfare. Attempts at preserving the physical environment increasingly vitiate efforts to sustain human development.

The rhetoric of poverty reduction has all but supplanted any real commitment to the higher ideal of humanism. The much-touted "equality of opportunity" is proving to be no more than a mask for economic Darwinism. Moreover, the freedoms expected from healthy competition under private enterprise are being rapidly restrained by the controlling hand of powerful conglomerates.

In the political arena, we cannot help but note that the ascendancy of democracy often means not greater popular participation and consensus but the rule of the powerful and its manipulation of the majority. Democracy is increasingly becoming a cloak for government by oligarchy, often going hand in hand with the rise of racism and ethnic conflicts, fascist movements, minority disaffirmation, regional fragmentation and strident nationalism. Though often practised at the national level, the virtues of democracy are still conspicuously absent in the wider community of nations, creating isolationism among the rich rather than solidarity among humankind.

Naturally, the proponents of globalization and trade liberalization will argue differently. They are, of course, convinced that the free market will remedy the imbalance in economic growth between countries and that as it swells, all boats will rise with the tide. Where does the truth lie? Let us look at the empirical evidence.

Yet another contradiction that bedevils international cooperation is that which persists between the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development. With the rapid proliferation of conflict in various parts of the world and the resulting increase in peacekeeping operations, there is a growing preoccupation among developing countries that with the astronomical costs of implementing the Agenda for Peace, the Agenda for Development will be further starved of resources. Clearly, a sensible balance has to be struck between these two basic purposes of this Organization. After all, as Pope John Paul II has said, "Peace is but another name for development". New approaches must therefore be developed to strengthen the indissoluble link between development and peace, so that they are made mutually reinforcing through a greater investment in preventive, rather than enforcement, action.

As we can see, therefore, not only is there a wide disparity in the economic and social conditions of the developed and developing countries, but there is also an equally serious and more frightening difference in their perspectives on development policy. While we may use the same words to refer to these challenges, it appears that often we do not mean the same things. Globalization to many is the prescribed panacea for all economic ills, while others see it as a threat of further marginalization from the global economy.

Another buzzword which evokes different meanings depending on who uses it is governance. Coming from the North, governance smacks of conditionality to the South, which sees it more as good government through capacity-building. Similarly divisive are the fashionable labels of human rights, human security and humanitarian intervention, which, though seemingly clear at first blush, develop sinister connotations as the exchange proceeds. The list goes on. Even the words "human order", which we have used to describe this initiative, have been known in the past to be highly inflammatory. The mere mention of these words was sufficient to produce a severe allergic reaction in some audiences, leading them to react

violently against such concepts as the new international economic order and the new international information order.

Happily, it now appears that at the start of the twenty-first century and this new millennium, there is a greater tolerance for the word and concept of order. Witness the many statements heard at both the Millennium Summit and in the Millennium Assembly debate, in which one often heard reference to the need for a more enlightened global dispensation in this world. More surprisingly, the calls for such an order came not only from developing countries but also from developed ones. All delegations will have seen, I hope, the article in the *International Herald Tribune* of 7 September 2000 entitled "Progressive Equation: Globalization and Welfare", which featured a letter signed by the leaders of four important European States: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. In that public pronouncement, those heads of Government stated, inter alia:

> "We believe that there is an emerging consensus on the right framework to build a global order based on equal worth and social fairness ... We are committed to a new international social compact. We recognize that in an increasingly interdependent world the aims of wider prosperity and a strengthening of civil society cannot be pursued within the nation-state alone".

They went on to state that

> "the key to development is to establish a virtuous circle" — and here I underline the word "virtuous" — "between laudable aims that too often are pursued in isolation — debt relief, conflict prevention, trade, educational and health investment, environmental enhancement".

These sentiments are certainly not dissimilar from those embodied in our own proposal. Why then can we not come together in this "Tower of Babel" that the United Nations is to agree on a common understanding and a common agenda for the United Nations? Why does the great political will which is often spoken of in the Assembly and elsewhere not descend into the first basement? Perhaps we should meet here a little more often.

The second most frequently asked question is, "What is this new global human order? What is it all about?" Having been in this house longer than most, I know that any new initiative, no matter how well intentioned, is suspect. Suspicion is, in fact, the single most important impediment to agreement among nations. Yet it is a fair question which deserves an answer. In attempting to provide one, I should perhaps first say what the proposal is not.

Contrary to what some may fear, it is not a call for another United Nations talkfest. As we are all painfully aware, there are enough of these. It is instead a serious and honest attempt to find common ground on which future international cooperation can be premised and to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to development instead of the present ad hoc and scattershot manner in which we proceed. Furthermore, it is not intended to conflict with other initiatives and proposals already in existence and currently being pursued. Rather, it should be considered as a complementary device for facilitating consensus. Conceivably, it could also serve as a safety valve if or when, for whatever reason, the established negotiating processes flounder or fail.

A quick reading of the documentation that was circulated will, I hope, make it clear that the new global human order is not merely a philosophical concept, but a practical agenda for development. One of its most interesting aspects is the proposal for a modern and enhanced version of the Marshall Plan to assist developing countries to reach the threshold of self-reliant economic development and be able to enter the global economy. In this regard, it is interesting to note the sense of morality which appears to have motivated the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War.

If we revisit the speech which the then Secretary of State Marshall made at Harvard University in June 1947, we cannot fail to be impressed by his declared altruism. He said:

> "Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty ... and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. Such assistance, I am convinced, must not be on a piecemeal basis as various crises develop."

Would that today, when the world economy is again adrift with uncertainty, such progressive thinking could

re-emerge, resulting in the equally bold measures that are needed to put it on the right course.

I may add that the proposals mentioned in the documents are not exhaustive, but merely indicative. Several others have evolved from the wider discussions which have taken place since the concept of the new global human order was first introduced. Obviously, although by no means novel, many of these ideas can be implemented only if they command general consensus. We are therefore not propounding them for consideration at this stage. As I said at the outset, our main objective now is simply to initiate a dialogue aimed at securing a reconciliation of the many divergent views on development that prevent progress so that we might be able to develop a shared vision and strategy for the future.

That brings me to the third question that may legitimately be asked: how do we do this? How do we find the political will to energize our efforts to create a new development paradigm for the twenty-first century? My delegation is currently in the process of negotiating a draft resolution that will outline a clear set of procedures designed to promote wide-ranging consultations among the various developing partners to explore the outer limits to which they are prepared to go in development cooperation. Hopefully, such a dialogue could establish the basic terms and conditions of the new partnership and at the same time provide a certain degree of predictability and reliability in our cooperation.

There can be no doubt that the best forum for undertaking such an enterprise is the United Nations. Accepted as the most representative of international institutions, the United Nations is ideally suited to promoting agreement among Member States. Moreover, the Secretariat is well equipped to provide the necessary intellectual support for the development of these initiatives. Member States, however, cannot delegate or escape responsibility for determining the uses to which the Organization must be put or for deciding how it should be geared to perform these functions. Too often — for example, in the attempt to reform the Security Council — we make the mistake of trying to shape the institutions before agreeing upon what we wish them to do. The result, not surprisingly, is that very often we put the cart before the horse.

In conclusion, let me say that the lineaments of this new global human order already exist in the United Nations Charter. We need only to build on this structure to ensure that the Organization works in the manner intended. My delegation is not naive or foolish enough to believe that this proposed order can come into existence overnight. Its creation will require not only strong political commitment to the principles and purposes of multilateralism, but also dedication and patience in translating them into reality. We believe, however, like the Chinese people, that the longest journey begins with the first step. We are therefore content today to take merely the first step.

Programme of work

Before proceeding to the next item, I would like to announce some additions to the programme of work of the General Assembly. I would like to inform Members that on Thursday morning, 26 October 2000, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 16 (c), entitled "Election of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" as the second item. The General Assembly will also resume consideration of agenda item 31, entitled "Elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion" as the fourth item for action, draft resolution A/55/L.9/Rev.1.

Next week, on Monday morning, 30 October 2000, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 183, entitled "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" as the fifth item. The list of speakers for item 183 is now open.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.